

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

FRIDAY, 6th APRIL, 1934

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OFFICIAL REPORT



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Friday, 6th April, 1934

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber of the Council House at Eleven of the Clock, Mr President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty) in the Chair

RESOLUTION *RE* COMMITTEE OF ENQUIRY ON AGRICULTURAL DISTRESS

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty) The House will now resume consideration of the following Resolution moved by Rai Bahadur Lala Brij Kishore on the 14th February, 1934

'That this Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council to appoint a committee of enquiry consisting of officials, experts and Members of the Assembly to enquire into the causes of the present agricultural distress and to devise means for improving the condition of landholders and peasants.'

Diwan Bahadur Mudaliar had not concluded his speech on that date

Diwan Bahadur Mudaliar

(Diwan Bahadur Mudaliar was not in his seat)

Mr Bhuput Sing.

Mr. Bhuput Sing (Bihar and Orissa Landholders) Sir, I beg to move:

"That for the Original Resolution the following be substituted

'That this Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council to appoint a small committee to enquire into the causes of the present agricultural distress and to devise means for improving the condition of landholders and peasants' "

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty) Order order The Honourable Member wants to substitute his Resolution for the original Resolution, but the Chair finds that it is substantially the same and, where an amendment is substantially the same as the original Resolution the Chair cannot allow that to be moved The Honourable Member may make a speech if he wants on the original Resolution

Mr. Bhuput Sing: I want to point out, Sir, why the Resolution moved by Rai Bahadur Lala Brij Kishore is not acceptable He wants a committee consisting of officials, experts and Members of the Assembly I want to omit that portion

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty) Order, order Then the proper way would be to say "omit these words and substitute these words". That must be the proper way of doing it

“That in the Resolution, the following words be omitted :

‘of enquiry consisting of officials, experts and Members of the Assembly’.”

Sir, this amendment proposes to do away with the recommendation regarding the personnel of the Committee. Everyone agrees that there is agricultural distress, and everyone, including, I hope, the Treasury Benches, will agree that measures are required for relieving their distress. The Mover of the Resolution demands a certain set of persons to be on the Committee, amongst whom he mentions experts. In this particular case, I for one at least do not understand who are the men to be treated as experts for advising Government for devising means for improving the condition of the landholders and peasants.

As far as I can see, I feel that it is the Government only who can help the landholders in improving their position. As regards the peasants and agriculturists, their lot can be improved by the combined efforts of the Government and the landholders. In the circumstances, I feel and strongly feel that the responsibility of forming the Committee should be left to the Government, and we should not make any recommendation as to who should and who should not be members of such a Committee.

Sir, in moving my amendment, I was actuated by some other idea as well. Our past experience of Committees and Commissions under the present system of administration is very bitter. Findings of Committees, appointed on the recommendation of the Legislature, and containing Members of the Legislature have always been left in the dust and silence of the upper shelves of the Secretariats.

In coming to the actual distress of the agriculturists, we find that they are being crushed unto death by starvation due to their heavy indebtedness on the one hand and to their not being able to realise even the cost prices of their produce on the other. On the top of it, they are to pay their dues to Government and the landholders as well.

Now, Sir, the rural indebtedness in India has been computed to be somewhere about 900 crores of rupees according to the Banking Enquiry Committee. Since that Report, the prices of commodities have fallen abnormally, and, naturally, on the present index value of articles, the indebtedness must have at least doubled itself, if not more. On the other hand, we find that the total value of all agricultural produce in India was about one thousand and eighteen crores of rupees in 1928-29 and this fell down to five hundred and thirty-six crores in 1931-32. With the further fall in prices during the last two years, the value of the total agricultural produce must have gone far below five hundred and thirty-six crores computed in 1931-32. In spite of the report of the Banking Enquiry Committee appointed by Government themselves, what have they done to alleviate the agricultural indebtedness during the last two years that the report is with them? To crown all, during the course of these two years, Government have saddled the country with a further taxation of a good many crores. After two years we find the Government having an Economic Conference of Provincial Ministers. Whatever the findings of the Conference may be, the result remains *nil* as before. We know the condition of the Provincial Ministers as much as the Government. They have been given the charge of nation-building Departments with no funds. Whatever taxation is raised by the Provinces is exhausted in paying for the highly-paid princely officers and in maintaining law and order. Whenever the

question of agricultural distress is discussed in this House, we are told by the Finance Member that he would try to raise prices by direct action and not by means of the devaluation of the rupee which may give a temporary fillip in the rise of prices, but that will not help this country permanently.

Sir, whether direct action or indirect action, we desire to see Government to make a beginning of some action immediately by which the distress of the rural population may be alleviated. In this connection it will not be out of place to mention the name of a Professor of the University of Madras, Mr. P. I. Thomas, who, in dealing with the rural indebtedness, concluded that, as far as he could see, there were only two ways by which the question might be tackled. Firstly, by taking steps to increase the income of the ryot from his agricultural produce, and, secondly, by restricting the scope of improvident expenditure on his part. Amongst other things, the establishment of land mortgage banks is the one of immediate necessity and which this House focussed its attention on so many times whenever occasion arose. Before I conclude, I once more repeat that what is needed is not Reports of Committees and resolutions of Economic Conferences, but immediate action by Government before it is too late and before famine and starvation wipes out the Indian cultivators and with them the landholders, who are the pillars of the Indian Administration.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): Amendment moved:

“That in the Resolution, the following words be omitted :

‘of enquiry consisting of officials, experts and Members of the Assembly’ ”

Mr. B. V. Jadhav (Bombay Central Division: Non-Muhammadian Rural): Sir, although I hold that the amended Resolution is more acceptable than the original one, still I feel that it is my duty to say something against the Resolution tabled. Here this Resolution asks for an inquiry. The inquiry is in order to devise means for improving the conditions of the landholders and peasants, taking into consideration the causes of the present agricultural distress. It is an acknowledged fact that on account of the lowering of the prices of foodgrains, the condition of the agriculturist or the cultivator has become very precarious and on that account also the condition of the landholders is equally bad and the relations between the landholders and tenants have become strained. This deplorable condition has drawn the attention of Government, and a Committee of the Members of the Executive Councils of various Provinces is at present sitting and devising means for the amelioration of the ryot, and, therefore, I think that a new Committee is not at all wanted. This Committee which is at present sitting will submit its report to the Government of India, and the Government of India are expected to take action on it. Therefore, as the purpose of this Resolution is already accomplished, I do not think the time of the House should be taken in discussing it. At the same time, I may point out that although the Government of India have called together a Committee of the Executive Councillors of the various Provinces, still the idea appears to be to form a general outline of the work and ask the different Provinces to examine their own agricultural conditions and to devise means.

India is a vast country and the land tenures are of different kinds in different Provinces. In Bengal there is the permanent settlement as well as in Bihar. In the United Provinces, there is the Talukdari system and large tracts of land are owned by Talukdars who get their lands cultivated by tenants. In the Presidency of Bombay, there is the ryotwari system and

[Mr. B. V. Jadhav.]

every individual cultivator deals directly or is dealt directly with the Crown. In this way the conditions of the tenure and the conditions of land revenue and the relations of the landlord and the tenant are different in different parts of the country. Therefore, a Committee, however small or however efficient or however big it may be dealing with the indebtedness and with the relations between the landlords and the tenants of various Provinces, is not likely to be of great use. It will be better for the various Provinces to have Committees of their own for the purpose of seeing how the relations between the landlord and the tenant can be made more amicable and at the same time how to raise the commodity prices. In this connection, I may point out that the various Provinces are represented in this House by Official Members, and their opinions and their ideas about the relationship between the landlord and the tenant in the various Provinces will be a very good contribution to the debate on this Resolution. Therefore, it will be for the Members on the Government Benches to come forward and give their opinions as to the present condition and the methods they would like to recommend in this behalf. Sir, I oppose the Resolution.

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad (United Provinces Southern Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): May I ask one question before the Honourable Member sits down. Has he considered the possibility of appointing one Central Committee and associating men in each Province with it to discuss the provincial problems?

Mr. B. V. Jadhav: I do not think it will be very profitable. It is much better to leave each Province to deal with its own peculiar circumstances separately.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh: (Muzaffarpur *cum* Champaran: Non-Muhammadan): Then you are opposing the Resolution as well as the amendment.

Rai Bahadur Kunwar Raghubir Singh (Agra Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I extend my wholehearted support to the Resolution moved by Rai Bahadur Lala Brij Kishore. It is known to everybody that the condition of the agriculturist is going from bad to worse and I am glad to see in this House the interest which the Honourable Members are taking now in the betterment of the agriculturist.

Mr. N. M. Joshi (Nominated: Non-Official): Where is that?

Rai Bahadur Kunwar Raghubir Singh: Even Mr. Joshi, although he pleads the cause of labour, has not spoken much in favour of the agriculturists. Sir, even a great industrialist, I mean Sir Montagu Webb of Karachi, has written a book which is named "India's Plight: Debts doubled: Development damned". It traces its causes and suggests remedies. This Resolution also wants that a committee of inquiry should be appointed to inquire into the causes of the present agricultural distress and to devise means, and on this very point Sir Montagu Webb is very clear. He suggests in that book that it is the exchange and currency policy of Government to which steep fall in prices of commodities. Secondly, he gives figures of taxation which have been "extracted from failing agriculture and vanishing trade" and observes, "It will be noticed that although the prices of agricultural produce have fallen by over 50 per cent., Government have nevertheless extracted from agriculturists in 1931-32 only about

six per cent less land revenue than in 1923-24". He points out that in India falling prices, shrinking trade and diminishing revenues have been most incredible; it may seem, firstly, by imposition by Government of still heavier taxation and, secondly, the general degradation of the administration by means of cuts and other things. The author attributes the fall in prices to "a prolonged policy of currency restriction deliberately adopted at the close of the war by bankers of the West enforced in India and elsewhere and throughout the world and still adhered to by the financial powers of London with tragic stubbornness and almost incredible lack of world vision". Sir Montagu de P. Webb quotes figures of production to prove that the recent calamitous fall in India is due not so much to over-production in the country as to the chronic shortage of money in the hands of the people. He has urged reduction of taxation in land revenue all round which, at the present price levels, is more than agriculture can bear, and to derate the rupee.

The greatest trouble of the agriculturist is due to the fall in prices, and it has been admitted by everybody. Year before last we tried to get some duty on the import of wheat, and Sir George Rainy was pleased to accept our suggestion, and the duty on foreign wheat was levied. The prices of wheat rose, but not to a very considerable extent so as to benefit the agriculturist. The Government may point out that it is a provincial subject and it is for the Provincial Governments to look to the betterment of the conditions of the agriculturist. But, Sir, the raising of prices of agricultural produce is in the hands of the Central Government and by such action as was taken by Sir George Rainy the prices of agricultural produce can go up. Hence, it is very necessary that the Central Government should take steps to raise the prices of agricultural produce. We did something for wheat, but we have done very little for cotton and other agricultural produce. The condition throughout the country of the agriculturist is very bad and we see that in other countries steps are being taken to raise the prices of agricultural produce, and this can be the only remedy to better the condition of the agriculturist. If the steps are not taken very soon, not only the condition of agriculturists will grow from bad to worse as it is going now, but even the industrialists and other manufacturers will also suffer, because the prosperity of industry and other trades depends upon agriculture. Unless the condition of the agriculturists is improved, there is no hope of any betterment of the condition of industrialists as well as of other trades. So, in the interests of all the trades in the country, it is incumbent on Government to establish a committee of enquiry or to devise means. The causes of the bad condition of the agriculturists are well known, and it is the means which are required to meet the situation and to nip the evil in the bud. I know some of the Provincial Governments are keen on setting matters right. But more strict measures are required to better the condition of the giver of bread. There is also the amendment of my Honourable friend, Mr. Bhuput Sing, but it does not differ very much in substance from the original Resolution and hence I support the Resolution.

Nawab Naharsingji Ishwarsingji (Bombay Northern Division: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I have got full sympathy with the Resolution moved by my Honourable friend, but at the same time I doubt whether the committee appointed by this House, as suggested in the Resolution, will serve the purpose which it is intended to do. It is a fact that the conditions of the agriculturists as well as the landlords are not so favourable in these days, but the condition in every Province differs from one another. In Bombay,

[Nawab Naharsingji Ishwarsingji.]

there are a number of tenures and the relations of the landlord and tenants in Bombay are quite different from the relations that exist between landlord and tenants in other Provinces. What I really believe is that this measure must be taken by every Provincial Government, and, after getting their reports, the Government of India may be in a position to devise measures for improving the condition of landlords and tenants in the light of the opinions received from the Provinces. In my opinion, it will serve better the interests of agriculturists and landlords rather than to have a committee appointed by this House. The subject is a very vast one, the country is very wide and the tenures may be more than hundreds, and, in my opinion, if we have a committee, as suggested in the Resolution, it cannot serve the purpose so nicely and adequately as it will be served by the committee appointed by Provincial Governments who will, in their turn, report to the Government of India, and then the Government of India may come to a conclusion as to what means should be devised to improve the condition of landlords as well as tenants. At the same time, I have full sympathy with the Mover of the Resolution.

Sir Darcy Lindsay (Bengal. European): Sir, in spite of my sympathy with the objects of the Resolution, I cannot but feel that it is out of place at the moment when Government have taken steps to appoint an Economic Enquiry Committee which is already sitting to consider these very points and all Provincial Governments are taking steps in the same direction. I, therefore, cannot see the advisability of appointing a small committee of this House to endeavour to achieve the very objects that the Provinces and the Central Government have in hand.

One Honourable Member said, the cause of the great depression in agriculture is the fall in prices, and he asked Government to take steps to raise the prices. But, to my mind, Sir, that is a very difficult proposition and almost an impossibility for the Government to achieve. The fall in prices is due largely to overproduction, largely to general world depression, and when we come in for better times, I have no doubt that the prices will rise to a level that will give the agriculturists a fair return for their labour.

Another point is that the agriculturist is oppressed by his heavy debt. That is the real cause of his trouble. He does not really earn for himself, as a very large proportion of the money that he gets for his crops goes to pay the interest on the money he has borrowed; any assistance that can be given in that direction is all to the good. It brings to my mind the efforts made by one of my own community, Sir Daniel Hamilton, who, in the Sunderbans, reclaimed land and settled cultivators thereon and he has a colony now of something like 12,000 persons. He took over, I believe, all the debts of the people, he abolished the money-lenders and he would not allow any of his tenants to borrow in the open market, otherwise they had to repay what he had advanced them and they could no longer be his tenants. He charged them a fair rate of interest half of which went towards a fund for the betterment of the people themselves in the shape of the establishment of dispensaries, schools, and so on. I understand that the colony is in a very happy position. They have this debt to their landlord which I believe they are paying off owing to the greater earnings they receive from their cultivation.

Nawab Naharsingji Ishwarsingji: Where is that colony?

Sir Darcy Lindsay: It is in the Sunderbans. If there was a spread of this movement throughout the country, it would be all for the betterment of the people, and I recommend to the Members of the House and those interested in the agriculturists to a study of the scheme inaugurated by Sir Daniel Hamilton. Sir, I regret I must oppose the Resolution.

Raja Bahadur G. Krishnamachariar (Tanjore *cum* Trichinopoly: Non-Muhammadian Rural): On a point of information. I have already spoken on the original Resolution, may I now speak on this amendment?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): If the Honourable Member catches the President's eye, he can speak.

Raja Bahadur G. Krishnamachariar: Now I have caught your eye.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): Mr. Sitaramaraju.

Mr. B. Sitaramaraju (Ganjam *cum* Vizagapatam: Non-Muhammadian Rural). Sir, I rise to offer a few remarks on this Resolution. The last speaker has remarked that at the present moment there is an Economic Enquiry Committee going on and that that Committee can deal with matters of this kind. Sir, the Economic Enquiry Committee that is now sitting is purely an official body of Provincial representatives of Governments. What this Resolution wants is something more than that. It desires to associate non-official Members in an enquiry of this kind. We do not exactly know what the Economic Enquiry Committee is doing now.

Mr. G. S. Bajpai (Secretary, Department of Education, Health and Lands): I should just like to inform my Honourable friend that it is not an Economic Enquiry Committee, it is just a Conference to discuss economic problems.

Mr. B. Sitaramaraju: I accept the correction. The real indebtedness and the distress that is now felt throughout the country has been so great that it is not only easy for us to express our sympathy, but also give our active support for any scheme or any enquiry committee that may be asked to go into that question. Sir, we have had an unfortunate experience of inquiries. If inquiries are meant merely to shelve the question, then it is far better to have no inquiries at all. The inquiries ought to tackle this problem which we all know is very serious and of great importance. If the Government intend to tackle the problem boldly, then we welcome such an inquiry as is contemplated under this Resolution. It cannot be gainsaid that at the present moment an inquiry into a subject of this nature has become urgent and more important than anything else. Sir, in supporting this Resolution, it is not my desire to go into the question of rural distress and the amelioration of the conditions of the agricultural population at length, as I have done that on an earlier occasion while speaking on the Reserve Bank Bill. But this much I do say that there is one important factor for our consideration and that is the volume of rural indebtedness in the country. Unless any inquiry that may be held proposes to tackle that all-important problem of rural indebtedness, this inquiry will be of no use. The inquiry may tell us the causes of low prices, they may tell us the effect of the ratio and things like that, but important as they are for consideration there is another which is more important than all that, and that is rural indebtedness. At the time when the Banking Inquiry Committee held their sittings, they calculated rural indebtedness to be in the neighbourhood of 900 crores.

[Mr B. Sitaramaraju.]

Sir, taking the Province which I have the honour to belong to, the rural indebtedness in that Province is in the neighbourhood of about 150 crores. Unless the question is boldly tackled, no useful purpose is served by inquiries of this nature.

The last speaker, Sir Darcy Lindsay, made some remarks about the steps taken by Sir Daniel Hamilton. Sir, I came to know of that gentleman during the Reserve Bank debate. His large-heartedness, his sympathy for the agricultural population I admire, and I have learnt to admire the great concern which he has been showing since the debate on the Reserve Bank for this by far the most important problem that can be tackled. I endorse all that has been said of him by the last speaker, and, today, if I rise to speak, it is with the intention of inviting the Government of India to do what Sir Daniel Hamilton has done in his own estate. To tackle this problem of rural indebtedness, I do consider that the establishment of a land mortgage bank for the specific purpose would greatly alleviate the distress. A great deal has been said in this House already on the virtues of a land mortgage bank. But the greatest service that it would ever do to this country would be to deal with this rural indebtedness as a separate question for that purpose, and I think most of the troubles from which we are now suffering in this country would dissolve. It may be done by way of constituting a land mortgage bank to solve this problem of rural indebtedness. It is true, as was said by the Honourable the Finance Member on another occasion, that the matter for consideration on a question of this nature is the security which the ryot can offer and the amount of money that he will be able to bring forth to pay the interest charged on the loan that may be advanced to him. I consider that the matter is no doubt formidable, but still if it is approached from the right direction, it will eventually be found to be easy of solution. Under the auspices of such a land mortgage bank, if conciliation boards are established in each district headquarters with revenue and judicial officers, the co-operation of the non-official bodies or persons of the locality will enable the board to have the necessary help. The Board can take up this problem and work through the net work of the revenue authorities established in this country. They can thus satisfy themselves regarding the security that the ryot will be able to give the amount of interest that he will be able to pay and the way in which and the period within which this debt could be liquidated, I think the proposition would not be so difficult for solution as some may think it is. Government can lend at a very low interest and they may also take in statutory authority for making it compulsory for the money-lenders to take the bonds of the Government for their money and the loan would thus be transferred to the land mortgage bank and the land mortgage banks would be able to control the debt and fix the period of its repayment on a graduated scale. Thus, if Rs. 100 were to represent the debt, the instalment payable would be for a period of 50 years, I think, about 4·6 or thereabouts. It would be easy for him within a period of 50 years to pay that Rs. 100 in such small parts. In that way, Government, by offering these bonds, and undertaking statutory authority, would be able, without much cash investment to take over the debts of these people and thus adopt a scheme by which this rural indebtedness of persons who can offer security, etc., within 50 or 60 years can be hoped to be liquidated. For others, who have no security, there is no help nor can they expect assistance. A small sum of money may, however, be found

necessary for the land mortgage bank to inaugurate the scheme and advance it. That may not be difficult to find. With these remarks, I would like to press Government to take this matter into very serious consideration, the question of rural indebtedness and its solution by the establishment specially of land mortgage banks.

Mr. K. P. Thampan (West Coast and Nilgiris: Non-Muhammadian Rural): Sir, reference has been made to the opportuneness or otherwise of moving this Resolution just at present. It is said that a Conference of representatives of Local Governments of all Provinces of the country is being held here, and one of the Honourable Members suggested that the question will be tackled by them and that we need not discuss it here. On the other hand, Sir, I consider that the time is very opportune for this reason that the Government of India may consult the representatives of all Provinces and chalk out their line of policy in the solution of this question. It is very rarely that representatives of all Local Governments gather at the headquarters, and, therefore, I should think that this opportunity should be availed of by the Government of India to consult these people at a Joint Conference and know the opinions of all these people and find out what they can do in the several Provinces.

The importance of agriculture has not been adequately taken into consideration by the Government of India. That is my standing grievance against them. It is said that the output of agricultural products of this country come to the value of one thousand crores of rupees every year. If 20 years' purchase is the capital money invested in these lands, it easily comes to nearly Rs. 20,000 crores. This House and the Government have been taking steps to safeguard and protect what are very minor industries when compared with this. For instance, take the textile industry: the total amount of money invested in the textile industry is only Rs. 80 crores, and the total number of people engaged in that industry is only seven lakhs, while in agriculture, as I have said, the total invested is Rs. 20,000 crores; and, so far as the number of employees is concerned, it is about 90 per cent of the entire population of this country. So there is no comparison between the agricultural industry and the textile industry. If Government can go out of their way to give protection and safeguard the interests of the textile industry, I maintain it is the duty of the Government—a duty which ought to be paramount and not to be neglected—to protect agriculture also. Then there are other industries such as the steel, sugar and paper industries: all these have been given protection: there are only a few crores of rupees invested in these industries and the number of employees in them is infinitesimally small when compared with that of the agricultural industry. Agriculture is the mainstay of the Government. It is the main source of revenue for the Government. But for agriculture and the income derived from it, the Government cannot be maintained even for a single day: the whole edifice of the administration will fall to the ground. But then what is the position of the agriculturist just at present? He is highly indebted; as my friend, Mr. Raju, has said, the total amount of agricultural indebtedness comes to nearly Rs. 900 crores, and, in these days of acute economic depression, the agriculturist gets no value for the produce he raises. The value of rice, for instance, has gone down nearly to 33 per cent of what it was formerly. There is hardly any margin left with the agriculturist after paying the Government *kist*. He does not get even one per cent on his investment. As a matter of fact, even the Government *kist* cannot be adequately paid from the proceeds of his

[Mr K. P. Thampan.]

cultivation. The ryots have to pledge their jewels with the banks and find money for the Government *list*. They are subsequently sold for non-payment. That has been the real state obtaining in South India—at any rate in the place where I come from, and that is the reason why so much of gold is flowing out of this country. The Honourable the Finance Member said the other day that men who have invested money in jewels find it paying to sell the gold at this high price and are investing their monies in the post offices. I maintain that it is not the savings of the people that find their way to the post office, but the salaries of Government servants and other rich people which, in the absence of safe and proper investments, go to the post office to be invested in cash certificates and savings banks. It is not the money coming from the agriculturists and the poor villagers. As regards the gold, I maintain that it is this distress gold which is responsible for such enormously large export of gold from this country. And Government are merrily allowing that to go on without taking steps to stop it. I know that the plight of agriculturists judged by their condition in Malabar is really very serious. Our agricultural products are chiefly rice and cocoanuts. Every fortnight steamers are coming into the ports of South India with thousands of tons of rice, and Government do not take any steps to stop them. Already there is no value for rice in the land and if this state of affairs continues for some time more, paddy in our place will not be sold. You must look to your own house first; and as the proverb says, charity begins at home; and if Government are worthy of their name, they should take immediate steps to stop this enormous import in order to see that the agriculturists are protected. Otherwise, they will be failing in their duty.

So far as coconut is concerned, it is much worse. The import duty on coconut, two years ago, was reduced from 25 to 20 per cent in implementing the Ottawa Pact. I was told that Ceylon has not yet given effect to the terms of the Ottawa Agreement. Therefore, I do not understand why the Government of India should treat Ceylon as an empire colony. Though Ceylon is close to our country, so long as they do not strictly adhere to the terms of the Agreement, it is not the duty of this Government to give the benefit of the Agreement to Ceylon, and, I, therefore, request the Government of India to consider whether it would not be possible to revise the terms in regard to the application of the Ottawa Agreement to Ceylon and whether the import duty on cocoanuts and other products should not be brought up to the old rate. The value of coconut has come down from Rs. 60 to Rs. 15. That is the position so far as these two industries are concerned. The price of other agricultural products has diminished by about 60 per cent, while, on the other hand, by means of resettlement, the land assessment is mounting up and on the other the Government by indirect taxations of several kinds make the position of the cultivator unbearable. If it were any other country, the people would have revolted. It is owing to the innate peacefulness and incapacity to revolt, which I regret, is characteristic of this country, that this present position is tolerated. The Government will bear in mind that we have got very inflammable people in Malabar. Not very long ago, they gave considerable trouble. Their representatives here may be quite useless: take it from me that it is better to profit by their advice before it is too late. They can make their voices felt. (*An Honourable Member*: "Oh! Voices!") Voice is preliminary to action by the hand.

Before I conclude, I have to make a few observations on the Rural Group that has been recently formed in this Assembly. Out of the hundred odd elected Members, excepting a few who represent urban areas and special interests, the rest all represent the rural constituencies; and there is no need to form a Rural Group. It is practically an election stunt. The elections are approaching

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty). The Chair does not think that is relevant to the issue.

Mr. K. P. Thampan: Government must be cautious in paying heed to their advice or to the demands of this Rural Group.

An Honourable Member: What are the demands?

Mr. K. P. Thampan: No demands; nor any policy. Sir, there are interests and interests. There is the landholder who has invested lakhs of rupees and who is only an investor. There is another class of people who, though middlemen, find the required capital for raising the crops and serve a useful purpose, and, thirdly, there are the agriculturists who cultivate their own plot or land themselves, and, lastly, the wage earning class. Now, the interests of all these different classes of people are always conflicting, and, therefore, Government ought to be careful and see who are the real mainstay of the country. If the demands of any class are such as to enable them to exploit the agriculturists and the poor peasants, it will be a ruinous policy indeed to support them. Sir, I am a landholder myself, but I have no objection to sell away the whole of my property to the peasants if the Government will launch a policy, as was done in Ireland, by which the land will be divided into small areas and the real cultivator becomes the proprietor of the soil. The panacea for all trouble lies in that way and ought to be the final aim of the Government. Whatever policy the Government might pursue in this matter, it ought to be conceived in such a manner that the final aim should be that which I have now indicated. Sir, with these few words, I heartily support the Resolution before the House.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt (Burdwan Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I must first of all thank my friend, Rai Bahadur Lala Brij Kishore, for having moved this Resolution in this House. It has been truly remarked by my friend from Malabar, who asks for a separate Province, . .

An Honourable Member: No, he does not ask for it.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt: I must at least thank him for the way in which he has brought out in this debate the fact how the Government come out with protection to all sorts of industries, and, in order to give protection to capitalists and commercial magnates, Government had gone so far as to have a permanent Tariff Board with highly paid officers, to the emoluments of whom many aspire, but few succeed in getting

An Honourable Member: What about your neighbour?

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt: My neighbour is a labour leader.

[Mr. Amar Nath Dutt.]

Now, if the Government are so keen about protecting their subjects, be they rich or poor, they ought to devise means for the protection of the poorest in the land. If the income of some of these capitalists, who have invested in steel industry or cotton mills and other concerns, were reduced, say, from ten lakhs to five lakhs, I do not think they will starve, and before affording them protection and devising means to give them further protection, it was the bounden duty of the Government to see that the teeming millions, upon whose labour depends the production of food of the whole people of this country as well as of other countries and upon whose payment of the revenue depends this great administration, do not die of starvation. Sir, in a Session of nearly three months, we had devoted so many days to discussions relating to the improvement of the condition of industrialists and commercial men, but I am sorry to say that we had up till now very little discussion on this matter, save and except the Resolution brought forward by my friend, the Rai Bahadur, and also in one or two informal meetings which my friend over there was kind enough to organize. I know, Sir, his limitations also. I won't blame him, and I cannot blame him, but at the same time I do submit that it is the bounden duty of the Government, not only to make an inquiry, but also to devise means to improve the lot of the teeming millions of agriculturists. In the Government of India, there are friends who can devise means for relief for all sorts of distress. Even the distress of the sugar-cane growers did not escape the eagle eye of the Government, and they are going to regulate the price of sugar-cane. Sir, is it not possible to regulate the price of wheat and rice also? If we make a demand for it, in whose interests are we doing it? Not in our own interests, because, according to my friend, Mr. Thampan, whom I miss here now, but who himself is a big landholder,—I am not as big a landholder as my friend, I am a small landholder,—but both of us are vampires sucking the very lifeblood of the ryots

Honourable Members: No, no. (Shame. Shame)

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt: It was an electioneering stunt on my Honourable friend's part when he said that he was prepared to give away the whole of his zamindari and mix up with the ranks of my friend, Mr. Joshi, and take to socialism as his economic creed. I was told by another landholder of his Presidency, a great Raja, that lands do not fetch any price, and so he can afford to be very benevolent now by offering to give away his zamindari. In fact, Sir, the case is the same in Bengal. I am prepared to part with my own estate for 25 per cent of its original price, but I cannot be so generous as to make a free gift as my friend over there.

Mr. K. P. Thampan: On a point of personal explanation. Sir, I had not the remotest idea of making a free gift of my lands. I did not mean that. In fact, the attitude that I took up today was taken up very nearly ten years ago when the question of giving occupancy rights to the Malabar tenants came up in the Madras Legislative Council.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt: I am glad that he has come down to my position. He now says that he is not prepared to make a free gift of his lands. I was also not willing to make a free gift of my lands either. At any rate, it did not sound well when it came from a

12 Noon.

person of his position who ought to be the protector of his ryots. If he wanted to draw a picture of the class whom he had in view before us, probably he looked into the mirror and saw his own picture. He is in a happy state. I am told that in South India the tenants pledge their jewellery, while in Bengal the ryots have absolutely no jewellery, so to speak, to pawn. Those in Madras have something upon which they can live in years of distress, while those in Bengal actually go without food, one meal a day they do not even get, and with half fed children on their knees the sight is a pitiable one. I appeal to the Government, never mind the commercial magnates, never mind those industrial magnates, never mind the clients of Mr Joshi who are industrial labourers getting an income in a month which the poor ryots in the villages do not get in the whole year, because I think Mr. Joshi's view is that every labourer ought to get at least Rs 100 a month in order to keep up a decent living. I do not ask for that luxurious living for the poor ryots living in the villages. My Honourable friend has threatened the Government that there will be revolt and that their voices will be felt, that the Malabar people are very inflammable, and so on. All these idle threats I am not going to utter. Government know to apprise them at their true worth. We have been talking of revolts and rebellions. Is it the fault of the Government alone? The only charge that we can lay at the door of the Government is that they have not taken the same interest in the matter as they ought to have taken. But are we not in a way responsible also? Have we made that insistent demand upon the Government and informed them in a way, so that the plight of the ryots might be attended to? Today is the non-official Resolution day, and the Resolution which is discussed now is one of the most important Resolutions that have ever been discussed on the floor of this House, and the benches are empty

Mr. S. C. Mitra (Chittagong and Rajshahi Divisions: Non-Muhammadian Rural): The Official Benches are emptier still.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt: There is the Leader of the House to attend to you and he can afford relief

The Honourable Sir Brojendra Mitter (Law Member): Let me say, Sir, that the Government Members are at the present moment busy trying to solve the very question which is being debated here.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt: I think my Honourable friend, Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad, will be thankful to the Honourable the Leader of the House for the information which he has vouchsafed, but I submit that I am not satisfied. The Conference that is going on is a conference with men like myself and Mr. Thampan who really do not feel the same interest in the welfare of the poor ryots whose life and comfort has been entrusted to their care. That being so, I submit that it would be better if all the members of the Economic Conference were given seats in the Distinguished Visitors' Gallery or in your Gallery and they had listened to our speeches, and I think more good would have accrued then than what can be achieved there. There are people many of whom probably have no idea of village life. With due deference to the Leader of the House, I may be permitted to say that even he has little or no knowledge of village life and agriculture.

Mr. G. S. Bajpai: I do not wish to interrupt the flow of my Honourable friend's oratory, but I should like to tell him that a majority of the members of the Economic Conference are men who have served anything from 15 to 30 years with the cultivator.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt: Ploughing lands themselves?

Mr. G. S. Bajpai: Served any time from 15 to 30 years amidst the cultivators. It is not necessary to wield the plough in order to be able to appreciate the difficulties of the ploughmen.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt: My Honourable friend's interruption reminds me of the way in which statistics and other things are collected by the Government. The *Ma-Bap* of the district, the District Magistrate, who happens to live in the district town, is credited with a knowledge of the ryots

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The Honourable Member's time is up.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt: With these words, I would like to give my full support to the Resolution which has been moved by my Honourable friend. I once more emphatically demand of the Government that they should bestow more attention on this subject than on the subject of protection of steel industry or protection of textile industry, and so forth.

Khan Bahadur Mian Abdul Aziz (Punjab: Nominated Official): The Resolution before the House contains the phrase "agricultural distress". I think that that phrase ought to be properly understood. The land continues to wield, so far as I know, practically all over the country as before. There is no diminution in the yield.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh: The fertility has decreased in many parts of the country, especially in Bihar.

Khan Bahadur Mian Abdul Aziz: The land continues to yield as before, the livestock continues to breed practically as before (*An Honourable Member:* "Question"), and the main difference is that the people who breed money have suddenly become barren. That is the main difference. They do not produce money at the same rate as they did before, and that is where the distress comes in. I have often asked people out in the villages what has happened, and the villager says, "My cow produces as before, my pig produces as before, but the man who produces money does not produce as before".

Mr. D. K. Lahiri Chaudhury (Bengal; Landholders): What is the solution for fruitful breeding?

Mr. S. C. Mitra: Nasik Press.

Khan Bahadur Mian Abdul Aziz: That has undoubtedly led to very great distress not only to people who carry on agriculture actually, but to people who depend upon agriculture.

A number of Honourable Members referred to the subject of taxation. I may be permitted to point out that the Province, to which I have the honour to belong, has taken measures to deal to the fullest possible extent with the situation that has arisen. For instance, the richest district in the whole of India, Lyallpur, is now being resettled, not with the object of increasing the assessment, but of decreasing it, and the decrease will be not of one, or two or ten lakhs, but it will be much more. I cannot give it, but it will really be much more. The poorest district, which lies next door to Delhi, is Gurgaon. During the last six years we have remitted there nearly 50 lakhs of rupees. We have remitted *takkavi* of over 14 lakhs which we had given in cash, on account of their distressed condition. But that is not all. In the last *kharij*, in that one district alone, on account of floods, crops were ruined, and we remitted, not suspended, seven lakhs, practically the whole of the demand.

Mr. B. V. Jadhav: There is remission and suspension, but is there any reduction in demand?

Khan Bahadur Mian Abdul Aziz: I will come to that.

I say that the whole of the demand was remitted. During the last three years since this economic crisis came, the Punjab Government have very nearly, on account of this drop in prices, remitted in water rates and land revenue over Rs. 80 lakhs. In many cases the remission was four annas in the rupee, in a number of cases it was six annas in the rupee, and everything that is possible has been done.

Mr. B. V. Jadhav: Is this remission for one year, or will it continue for a number of years?

Khan Bahadur Mian Abdul Aziz: From harvest to harvest as occasion arose remissions were given. I mention these facts merely to show that where there is real distress action is taken immediately. Not only is what is due not collected, but what has been actually advanced is not taken back and the loans that have been given are written off. This is not mentioned with any idea of taking credit for it, because it is a plain duty done simply under the requirements of the case, but there is the second part of the Resolution which interests me much more than the question of distress and that is the devising of means for improving the condition of landholders and peasants. Sir, an Honourable Member who spoke just now insisted strongly that a demand should be made upon the Government and he was right, but may I venture to say that all those who have the welfare of the village at heart demand the educated part of the community to come to the solution of this problem. The Agricultural Commission dealt with this question five years ago, and one of the complaints was that the educated people will not settle in a village. We have throughout tried our very best to get one educated man to make his home in village and to furnish a living guidance to the villager, but we cannot get the educated man. Even the teacher who earns his living there, as soon as he gets his pension, moves away. Time will not permit. Otherwise I will make a lengthy reference to that part of the Agricultural Commission's Report. I will read one sentence. The Report says about the villager:

"He lacks leadership. No one corresponding to the squire, the doctor and the parson is to be found in an Indian village. The educated man is not willing to live his life in a village except in a few rare cases where ideals of social service overcome the absence of social amenities."

Bhai Parma Nand (Ambala Division: Non-Muhammadan): Is not that the fault of the system of education, and who is responsible for that system?

Khan Bahadur Mian Abdul Aziz: People come from America to help our villagers. All honour to those angles who look after our ailing and sick. They come from Belgium, and there is a village in one of my former districts where priests from Belgium have settled and they have helped the poor and the distressed people in the Jhang district and the Hoshiarpore Tahsil.

An Honourable Member: In the Jhelum district also.

Khan Bahadur Mian Abdul Aziz: There are many other places. Our educated people are so wedded to the towns that they will not come and settle in the villages. I do not want to weary the House with other details, but I do want to mention one thing. Only a short time ago, in a neighbouring district, I happened to be presiding at a meeting where the newly appointed Commissioner of Rural Reconstruction was delivering a lecture to officers and to educated people, and I also had the opportunity to express some views on that subject. Our sole difficulty throughout was that we cannot get an educated man to settle in a village and devote his time to the villager. Even for currying on a propaganda, such as telling the villager that his house was a death trap and that all he needed was more light and air and a proper skylight, we cannot get the educated man. We cannot get an educated man even for this simple work of telling the villagers to keep the roads clean and the cattle away from human dwellings. I am not blaming anybody. But as I am interested in the thing, I go to these villagers and tell them that their requirements are good houses and clean water. I find that there are insuperable difficulties. There are in my division at present nearly 300 villages where for three months in the year the water they drink from the ponds is more contaminated mud than water and we cannot get rich people to supply them with wells. Formerly they did. Ever since the village has ceased to be a self contained unit, the people who earn the money there spend it elsewhere. It is no longer that the villager *sahucar* will build a well. It is no longer that he will build a *serai* there. It is no longer that he will build a school or a *pathshala* there. That is our trouble. We cannot get people to live there and to give guidance to these villagers. The very men who have grown fat on the income of the village will not stay in the village, but say to the villager "You are not of us".

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali (Lucknow and Fyzabad Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Is not that the result of a foreign Government's unsympathetic attitude?

Khan Bahadur Mian Abdul Aziz: I am not going into the causes. That is the fact. There is just one other thing that I want to deal with and that is this that, in so far as the representation of the villager and his interests in public life is concerned, there is great improvement, and I will only remind the House, perhaps the House is not aware of it, that in 1928 the Punjab Council passed a Bill amending the Punjab Land Revenue Act, the old Act of 1887, and in spite of Government opposition, for the official was simply gnashing his teeth, the Council carried into law an Act which

lays it down that no future Settlement Officer will ever raise in any particular circle the assessment by more than 25 per cent. As the new reforms came into effect in 1921, they compelled the Government to give it retrospective effect, with the result that we had to give back revenue to the extent of over ten lakhs.

Sir, it is easy to blame the villager. I say that our cultivator and his wife are still the best couple going. What he lacks is a little more sympathy and guidance. The poor man is strong in initiative in the village provided he has men to help him. He is really as strong and as willing to work as the rich man is poor in sympathy.

Mr. Muhammed Anwar-ul-Azim (Chittagong Division, Muhammadar Rural): Mr. President, I thank you for giving me an opportunity of speaking on this Resolution. I have listened with a great amount of interest to what is going on all round in all parts of the House. Without vouching for the correctness of the figures which have been collected by my friends, Mr. Raju and Mr. Thampan, I should like to say this much, that the issues involved in this Resolution of Lala Brij Kishore will have to be varied very materially according to the geographical position of the various Provinces in this big country. The conditions which will be necessary to alleviate the distress of the cultivator in Eastern Bengal will not, in my judgment, be applicable to relieve the distress of the frontier Pathan on the North-West Frontier Province. That being the case, this is certainly a very vexed question, and it will, therefore, be very difficult, even for the expert Members of this Assembly, to suggest any suitable means by which the object of this Resolution could be achieved. There is certainly a very great amount of force in the arguments put forward by Mr. Raju and Mr. Thampan when they say that Government, justly or unjustly, have been very much solicitous with regard to the amelioration of the condition of the industrialists as a whole and they have been very particular with regard to giving succour to certain industries which are trying to come out in the field. I have no grouse on that score with anybody, least of all with the Government of India. For, if the Government of India feel that the sugar industry has got to be protected, protect it by all means, but why should they not lend their generous ears to that part of the population who have been giving a very large amount of money to their coffers? I join issue very strongly with my Honourable friend, Mr. Thampan, when he says—"why should they not find out or devise some means by which the prices of agricultural produces, like jute, paddy or rice, could be raised? That is a very pertinent question to raise, but my personal impression—without prejudice to what my esteemed friend, the Secretary of the Department of Education, Health and Lands, has said, namely, that the Provinces have been sending representatives who have experience of a very large number of years, representing these interests in these Economic Conferences, as such there will be the solution,—but nothing tangible can be confidently anticipated from these conferences, judging from past experience. Sir, we know who are these so-called representatives. With regard to these gentlemen who have taken so much trouble to come up here, well, my impression is that the Government—and I make bold to say this most emphatically—will not be in a position to decide on anything as a result of their conversations here—because, my impression is this, that a particular Member might be holding a certain portfolio at a certain place, but

[Mr. Muhammad Anwar-ul-Azim.]

that does not necessarily connote that he will be in a position to come to the help of the Government of India in the Department of my Honourable friend, Sir Fazl-i-Hasan, in respect of the many resolutions on economic problems which have been put on their agenda.

Mr. President, there is certainly a very great deal of force in the theory that prices of paddy, of jute and of rice should be raised by certain means to a certain level; of course it would be rather difficult for anybody, least of all for me, to suggest off-hand what would be the best solution, but when Government are in a position to carry on such a huge costly administrative machinery, I should expect them, as I pay a large amount of revenue to their coffers, to come to our aid when we are in need of their help so badly. Sir, it would not be sufficient for the Government to say that they have been brooding over these things and perhaps some day something better might be achieved and then they will give us some succour, but that is no consolation to me.

Some friends have also suggested—why not explore the method of starting land mortgage banks, why not start this and why not start that? When, however, everything is said and done, my impression as the representative of a big rural constituency in Bengal is that the root trouble lies perhaps in what has been described by my Honourable and esteemed friend, Mr. Abdul Aziz, an experienced official of the Punjab Government. I know personally it is a fact that it is perhaps not always possible for Zamindars, big Zamindars even, to have a country house, but if they have some sort of connection with the village or the zamindari where they come from, if the big landholders that he had in view had a larger sympathy so as to impel them to come to the rescue of the peasants and cultivators, perhaps that would be of some use, but my impression is that unless and until the angle of vision is changed, unless and until you have some sort of tangible educational policy, unless and until you have some sort of benevolent policy, I am afraid no amount of legislation and no amount of committees constituted will serve the purpose. My most humble suggestion to the Government of India would be this. Try to have a liberal and a bold educational policy. Perhaps the Government's answer will be that, "well, we have given the Provinces a free hand and they have their own way of looking into things". My humble submission for the consideration of the Government of India would be that this transferring of the educational portfolio in the Provinces has not perhaps been a happy one, fruitful of any tangible results. Of course, Government are the best judge of everything, they know everything in their wisdom, but my impression is that these educational portfolios in the Provinces are really handled by amateurs, if I may say so, who have not been able to show any tangible achievement. I am not naming anybody. That being so, I ask how the villagers, the people living in the remote villages who can only come in contact with the *maktabs*, and *pathshalas* can have the advantage of education spread amongst them, drive their superstition and evil customs? You have distant towns, the so-called Provincial Councils, and you have an Educational Minister, an Education Secretary, Inspectors of Schools and all that paraphernalia, and my humble impression is that all this is more or less mere red tape and they never care for the real education and culture of the people living in the villages.

One instance, Mr. President, will suffice to show how the Government are solicitous to bring in the succour of education to the peasantry living in the villages. In my Province of Bengal, we had some sort of a law

passed by the Provincial Council for the introduction of rural primary education, but what was actually achieved? They have got nice rooms for the Department in Writers' Buildings in Calcutta, and if the Education Minister of that Province was solicitous for doing something for the rural population, he should have had the courage to fight with his colleague, the Revenue Member or the Finance Member, and see really whether they were in a position to give some money for the purposes of that Bill.

I think there is a great deal of force in what my friend, Mr. Thampan, said that if things are allowed to continue and not looked into in time, the apathy will work as a canker and the Government of India will not know before the whole body politic was eaten away leaving only the skeleton and they will then not know what to do. Sir, it was very pertinently suggested if this rural population had the advantage of mortgaging their assets with some legally-constituted bodies, just like land mortgage Banks or co-operative banks, perhaps they might escape the tyranny of having to pay extortionate rates of interest to the *sahucar*. Of course, I know from my experience in Bengal that you have got a law which was passed there recently for the fixing of the interest rates payable by these rural people, and, if my information is correct the rate is fixed at between twelve to fifteen per cent. Well, that is also on the Statute-book. If the Government were so solicitous and if the clauses of the particular Bill were given effect to, they would have certainly done some good to the peasantry to alleviate their distress. But we are living here in the distant Delhi, and perhaps the Government of India feel that their responsibility in these matters is not so much as that of Provincial Governments. My suggestion to the Government of India, therefore, would be that if these materials are ready, and if they are given a proper effect to and are likely to benefit the cultivator, why not just switch your light in that particular direction and give them the benefit of that experience. Mr. President, I am a very humble student of these figures myself, and I do not know how far I can vouch for their correctness, but the condition of the peasantry is anything but deplorable. The figures given by Mr. Raju and Mr. Thampan indicate a dreadful state of things. If it is a fact that the rural indebtedness has gone up to the tune of 8,000 crores, it is most shocking, and I am certain, the particular Department concerned will be well advised to enlighten us on the matter, because we are so much interested in ameliorating the condition of our poor brethren who are living in that condition of life in the villages. I think Mr. Raju also suggested that this rural indebtedness is also the result of internecine trouble of the parties themselves, and he has suggested a sort of a Conciliation Board. But I do not know how far this Conciliation Board will be able to serve the purpose he has in view. My own impression is that if you have a first class land mortgage bank and if you give effect to certain facilities given by law to the rural co-operative societies to lend money on easy terms and if you have an enactment that the money-lenders will not exact the rates of interest beyond a certain percentage and if all these things are given effect to gradually, I am certain that the whole purpose underlying the Resolution of my friend, Rai Bahadur Lala Brij Kishore, will surely be attained. With these words, Sir, I support the Resolution. The Government of India must continue to take a paternal interest in these matters, and thereby they will win over the whole of the rural population to their side which is the sore need of the day.

Mr. Sitakanta Mahapatra (Orissa Division: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I wholeheartedly support the Resolution moved by my Honourable friend, the Vice-President of the Rural Group. This is a most opportune move at the right moment. The plight to which the nation at large and particularly the agriculturists have been reduced during the last few years is too pitiable for words. It is only the innate passivity of the Indian people and the utter isolation from the life of the people in which supreme governmental authorities live and shape their policies that have prevented the mobilisation of social sympathy in support of the great national interest. To the extent to which the agriculturist consumes his own produce and pays for others, services and goods in kind, the fall in prices has not adversely affected his lot. The extent of payments in kind is, however, very narrow and even in areas, where cultivation is principally for subsistence, a considerable portion has every year to be marketed for the purchase of services and commodities, as also for the payment of such fixed dues as interest, taxes and loan. In the case of the growers of commercial crops, for example, cotton, sugar-cane, oilseed and jute, the fall in prices has hit the producers with special severity. In many parts of the country, rents are fixed in money and the leases are executed for a number of years at a time. In these places, the tenants find it impossible to meet the demands of the landlord. Unfortunately for us, in our parts, rents were fixed only in 1927-28 when the prices of produces were at their highest, and so our part of the country is the worst sufferer. Arrcars, indebtedness and privations are the inevitable outcome of such a situation which is extremely embarrassing both to the tenants and the land-owners. It is well known that the rates of interest are exceptionally high in India and that their level is determined by the customs of the trade and the position of the borrowers. With reduced prices, not only does the cultivator find it difficult to meet his old interests and instalment obligations but any new borrowing is well-nigh impossible except at ruinous rates. The co-operative banks which have their dealings with cultivator members have latterly experienced almost insuperable difficulties in making recoveries. Indeed, there are not a few co-operators who almost fear the worst in many areas. The Government demand for land revenue is theoretically based on averages of prices over a prolonged period and the land revenue Codes do not ordinarily allow suspensions and remissions on account of a fall in prices. We know how very wooden is the system of administration in India. It is extremely difficult to secure for the people even such concessions as have been provided for by law. It would be hoping for a miracle to expect that the Government would run to the rescue of the landholders in an emergency not falling strictly within normal official operations. In fact, in spite of the loud and heart-rending protests from the land-holding classes, the collections of land revenue have been effected with the usual rigour in almost all parts of the country. Any one, who has the slightest acquaintance with the country areas, knows full well that while the Government caravan proudly passes by as though nothing has happened out of the ordinary, the farmers, the land owners, the *Vahaians* and the co-operative societies are on the brink of an utter collapse. The standard of life in rural areas was never very high, the present conditions constitute a degradation which is beyond parallel. Sir, in his Budget speech, the Honourable the Finance Member said as follows:

"Landlords have not pressed for their full rents. India's ancient money-lending system has proved elastic and generally speaking demands for repayment of debts have not been passed. As a result, the great mass of agriculturists have had enough to eat and a sufficient margin in cash not only to pay taxes at the reduced level but also to maintain at a fairly reasonable level their purchases of necessities."

Sir, I am afraid his assumption was based on information received from tenth hand sources. It is said, the British administration is a choukidari Government. It is the choukidar who reports conditions in villages at the police station, the thana officer in his turn reports to the S. D. O., the S. D. O. to the Collector, and, so on and so forth, the information imparted by the choukidar is taken as a Gospel truth by the Supreme Government.

Raja Bahadur G. Krishnamachariar: And the Secretary of State.

Mr. Sitakanta Mahapatra: And the Secretary of State, as the Leader of the Rural Group points out. But let me tell you here that the choukidar received his information from his wife. But India is such a vast country that a Finance Member has got to collect his information in this way. But I may inform the Honourable the Finance Member that at least in my part of the country the conditions are exactly opposite to what he stated. Sir, land revenue and agriculture are both provincial subjects, and agriculture is transferred and Government may utilise this fact to shelve the Resolution. But it is the Government of India's financial and commercial policy which is responsible for the plight of the agriculturists. The ratio policy of the Government has undermined the purchasing power of the people, and their protection policy has raised the prices of necessities to such an extent that they cannot afford to purchase their vital needs.

A word for the Rural Group to which I have the honour to belong. We are almost all representatives of rural areas, but the object of the formation of the Group was that most of us played in the hands of commercialists as if paid by them—thus undermining the interest of our constituents, and this was the reason why the Rural Group was formed.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer (Rohilkund and Kumaon Divisions: Non-Muhammadan Rural): I wish just to ask whether it will be possible today to take up the Resolution relating to Malabar, for, otherwise, I can do some useful work in regard to arranging the tables and chairs for lunch.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): I am afraid I cannot help the Honourable Member. It is for the House to decide whether they will close the debate. They have got all the Resolutions on the agenda paper, and it is for the House to decide about the relative importance of the various Resolutions.

The Assembly then adjourned for Lunch till Two of the Clock.

The Assembly re-assembled after Lunch at Two of the Clock, **Mr. President** (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty) in the Chair.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Sir, there is a notion in the minds of some people here that I do not show sufficient interest in the agricultural masses of this country and that I devote greater attention to the condition of the industrial workers. This is quite a wrong notion. I feel a deep interest in the welfare of the agricultural classes both on personal and other grounds. I have lived in a village the whole of my childhood, and until I was 15

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years old I had not seen a bigger place than with a population of 3,000. I have taken part in the co-operative movement in my Province; I have taken part on more than three or four occasions in doing famine relief work. Moreover, Sir, I am convinced that any one who wants to improve the condition of the industrial workers in this country must necessarily study the condition in Indian villages. The two, in my humble judgment, are very closely connected. I, therefore, make bold on this occasion to make a few remarks on the subject which is under discussion.

Sir, the present distress which is seen in the agricultural areas of the country is partly due to temporary causes such as the world depression, and partly due,—and if I may say so, mainly due,—to causes which are more or less permanent in the Indian situation. As regards the temporary causes of the present distress, I made certain suggestions when I spoke on my Resolution concerning unemployment relief. I suggested that the Government of India should undertake a bold programme for public works and industrial development. I feel that that programme will be very useful in improving the condition of the agricultural classes. Reference has been made to the low prices for agricultural goods that at present prevail. These prices cannot rise unless those classes of people who are to purchase agricultural goods have sufficient money in their pockets. The first thing necessary to be done, therefore, is to develop our industries and to start public works, so that the workers of this country will have sufficient money to purchase agricultural goods. Sir, if we are to consider the several factors which create a sort of permanent distress in Indian villages, I would give the first place to our system of land tenure. In India, in ancient times, the land belonged to the village and not to the individuals in the village. The land was communally held and not individually held. Later on, developments took place

The Honourable Sir Brojendra Mitter: Is not that the case in all primitive societies? In all primitive societies, when the village is the unit of society, everything belongs to the village.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: That is quite possible; I am not suggesting that India's case is quite special in that respect, but the fact remains that the land did not belong to the individuals. The land belonged to the village, and, later on, private rights of property in land were created. I think, Sir, that was the greatest mistake that we made. Later on, these rights in private property were amalgamated in the hands of a small number of people. Lands belonging to the small cultivators passed to the money-lenders or to the bigger landlords on account of the uncontrolled system of money-lending and usurious practices. Sir, I feel that this growth of money-lenders and big landlords has caused a great part of the distress that we see in Indian villages. People hold land who have no real interest in cultivation. If, therefore, we want to improve the condition of the agricultural classes in this country, let us take steps to see that the land is held by only those people who are willing to cultivate the land with their own hands. They alone have great interest in improving the land and making the best of the land which they hold. Sir, it is not that the Government of India and the Provincial Governments in our country have not recognised the evil of the land passing into the hands of a few landlords. They discovered that evil, and some Governments in this country have taken some steps to prevent or restrict land passing into the hands of people who have no real interest in the cultivation of the land. In the Punjab,

they passed legislation restricting the passing away of land into the hands of money-lenders: in Bombay, we have similar legislation; in the United Provinces, there is similar legislation. Unfortunately, although the Government saw the evil, the remedies which they took were not bold enough: they tried to restrict the possession of lands in the hands of what they considered to be the agricultural classes. But they did not insist that the land should pass into the hands of only those who would cultivate the land with their own hands. They thought there were certain classes which were agricultural classes, although no member of the family of those agricultural classes may have held a plough in their hands for generations. It was that mistake which some of the Provincial Governments made with the result that although they made efforts to see that the land of the poor cultivators should not pass into the hands of money-lenders and big landlords, on account of which the land did pass into the hands of money-lenders and the bigger landlords. The only result was that instead of the land being taken away by any money-lender or any big landlord, the land passed into the hands of landlords and money-lenders belonging to what are called the agricultural classes, although, really speaking, they were not agricultural classes. I, therefore, feel that although the intention of the Government was a good one and the steps they took were not wrong ones, yet they did not achieve the results required, because they were not sufficiently bold ones. I would, therefore, suggest to the Government of India and the Provincial Governments to take bold steps to define an agriculturist as one who has been cultivating land with his own hands and who is willing to cultivate the land with his own hands, and see that the land is held only by that class of people and by no other, I feel that this is the real remedy, and the Government of India should adopt this remedy.

I do not wish to go into the details of the evils of the present system of landlordism. They are well known. It is only for us to keep our eyes open to see what they are. In India, even today, people have to cultivate their land from generation to generation at the will of the landlord. The Governments have passed legislation to give some kind of security to tenants, but still there is a very large class of tenants who are mere tenants at will and they have no security. Not only there is a very large class of men who are mere tenants at will, but there are classes of people even today who are tied to their fields as if they were slaves: when land is sold, these people, who are tied to the land, are, as it were, sold: they pass to the new landlord.

Mr. B. Das (Orissa Division: Non-Muhammadan): That is in Madras only.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: My Honourable friend, Mr. B. Das, says that that is in Madras. I can assure him that in his own Province of Bihar and Orissa, there are practices which are not very different from this practice. Even today in Madras, at least in some districts, a landlord, who has got the land to which some field workers are attached, can lease the services of these field workers to others as if they were his slaves. So long as these practices exist in our country, what is the use of asking the Government to appoint committees to go into the question of improving the conditions of the agricultural classes? We all know that these evils exist. What is required is courage in us, courage in the Government to take bold steps and to see that these evils are removed. If once we take steps to see that those people who are real agriculturists possess the land, then certainly it is for them with the help of modern science and modern principles to

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develop the land and better their conditions. If once people have the land, by their own co-operation they can find means and they will be in a much better position to find means to develop their land, to improve agriculture. If it is necessary for them to purchase modern ploughs and appliances, if it is necessary for them to market their goods to their greatest advantage, I am sure they will resort to the principle of co-operation; they will have co-operative agriculture, they will have co-operative marketing of their goods, and they will have co-operative credit as they are having even today. I feel that after the distribution of land what we should try to teach our agriculturists and help them in, is to start co-operative movement both for production and sale and also for credit. If they do that, the need for taking loans for agricultural purposes to a great extent will be minimised, and, as regards the loans themselves, I would suggest that the Government of India and the Provincial Governments should take immediate steps to see that every practice of usury is discontinued immediately. If the agriculturists require loans, these loans should be given to them by the Government. I am not suggesting that Government do not give loans to agriculturists: in several Provinces, perhaps in most Provinces

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The Honourable Member's time is up.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I shall not speak much longer. Several Governments have passed laws permitting them to give loans to the agriculturists. What is necessary is that the Government should resort to these loans to a much larger extent and remove the need of the agriculturists taking any loans from private people. I shall not speak at greater length, but I shall make one more observation on a small point, and it is this: during the discussion, I have found people speaking in such a way that they hold that there is a conflict between agriculture and manufacturing industries. I feel that there is absolutely no conflict between agriculture and manufacturing industries. Both these industries are complementary to each other. It is, therefore, wrong for people, who call themselves belonging to the Rural Group, to talk as if they are not interested in the development of manufacturing industries. It is equally wrong for people, who are interested in the manufacturing industries, to talk as if it is not to their interest that agriculture should be developed. I, therefore, hope that our Government as well as the Legislature will take equal interest in the development of manufacturing as well as agricultural industries. Sir, I have done.

Mr. J. H. Darwin (United Provinces: Nominated Official): I get up with great diffidence, because I am a tyro in speaking, but I venture to do so for three reasons. The first is that the Honourable Member, Mr. Jadhav, I think it was, who asked that Official Members should speak on this Resolution and say something about the conditions which prevail in villages. The second reason is that I have about 25 years experience of camping in villages during the winter, and so I can claim, to some extent, to be acquainted with the problems that exist at this moment. The third reason is that the Resolution contains, it seems to me, a sort of reflection on the Government of India and the Local Governments,—the

insinuation that the Local Governments have been sitting during the last two or three years with their hands folded and have ventured to do nothing to relieve the agricultural distress that prevails.

When this Resolution was originally brought up about a month ago, the Honourable the Mover said that Government should now tell us frankly whether they do want to help the poor classes of the country. It is that insinuation that I should like to repel. There was another Honourable Member, I think it was Raja Bahadur Krishnamachariar, who, in speaking of the problem, said that we should not tackle it with preconceived notions, it should not be complicated by considerations of world depression and all that this means. But I submit that we cannot rid ourselves of reasons that do exist, and when they really do exist, they are not the less valid for that, and indeed they might be the governing factors. Now, although I entirely sympathise with the spirit of the Resolution, I think it is nearly as much an executive as an administrative problem. Before we lay down rules or regulations or before we introduce new laws, we must see what the executive are able to do and how far they can shoulder the burden of any new legislation. Dealing with the problem only from above is like having to treat a patient with a broken leg and deciding we would not treat it locally by setting it and putting it into splints; but we would give the patient medicine. Well, that may be quite useful for relieving the patient of his fever, but it will not heal the fracture. The overhead system of treatment is of little good just by itself. The problem is one, I think, which concerns the Local Governments more especially, and that has been recognised, because an Economic Conference has just been formed to which the Ministers of Local Governments have been invited. The element that has so far not entered very much into our discussion is the nature of the problem, and I should like to dwell for a moment or two on that.

It is the nature of the problem which presents the greatest difficulties. There is, first of all, the poverty, the ignorance and the credulousness of the agriculturist classes. A lot about this has been written in the report of the Agricultural Commission and in Economic reports. No one can fail to be impressed with the squalor of the peasant houses, the want of sanitation, the absence of comfort and the few alleviations of a monotonous and laborious existence. No doubt education and more rapid means of communication have done something to improve their condition in the last few years, but this element still remains to a large extent. I was reading lately that most interesting work of Sleeman called "Rambles and Recollections", and I was much impressed by a story which he told of a visit which he paid to Muttra or its neighbourhood. He found that the cultivation there was in a very bad condition and he went to the villagers, sat amongst them and asked them what the reasons were. They told him that the reason was that there was such a lot of perjury and false swearing going on in the Courts which had been recently established by the British that this had removed from them the favour of God. They were only partially convinced when he tried to point out to them that the real reasons were much rather, the larger pressure on the soil after the Pindari incursions had been repressed and that the people took no trouble about the rotation of crops and that they never left their fields fallow. In fact the idea which the villager seemed to entertain about the Englishmen of that time was—it was somewhere in 1830—"that they came, they swore and they conquered". It is to be hoped that they do not have that

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opinion nowadays, but indeed a lot of credulousness still remains, and it is for that reason that it is very difficult to introduce innovations. The second reason is the conservative nature of the rural population. They have got a very limited outlook and what was good enough for their fathers they think is good enough for them: they resist all change and they still often retain the habits of a thousand years ago. There is a Latin saying with which many Honourable Members of the House will probably be acquainted. "You may turn out nature with a pitchfork, but it will always return".

The third reason is the heavy load of agricultural debt which is mostly inherited. In the United Provinces, it has been estimated to come to about 150 crores. One cannot get very far until that is relieved. The state of affairs has been aggravated during the last four or five years particularly by bad harvests. There has been unusually heavy drought, there have been locust pests and there has been very bitter frost. Then, we have to consider what methods exist for combating these conditions. Raja Bahadur Krishnamachariar suggested on the last occasion that he wanted a respectable number of persons associated with the enquiry. I do not know whether he meant by that that officials should be excluded, but I do not think it is possible to do without officials. They alone are the people who have the influence by which they can get the villagers to accept innovations. What we want is propaganda, more propaganda and more propaganda: and if we admit this, we have got to realise what the magnitude of the task is. In the United Provinces, there are 1,11,000 villages with an agricultural population of over 44 millions. On whom can we rely to introduce this propaganda? The *patwari* is no use. It is much better to keep the *patwari* to his own legitimate duties. Apart from *patwaris*, we have teachers, but, according to the recent census, I find that for every 1,500 of the population, there is only one teacher. He may often be just an assistant, and he will not be able to go very far; so that, we must have outside helpers before we can go forward, and I heartily endorse in this connection the remarks which the Honourable Member, Mr. Abdul Aziz, made this morning before lunch in which he called for the assistance of non-official workers. They seem to me to be extremely necessary, and, at present, from my own experience, I can say that they are not very much ready to come forward. In fact we cannot even get Doctors to stay in the villages even when we give them subsidies. The Government have done a great deal in the last three years in spite of what the House seems to think. I should like to give a few details as to what has been done by the U. P. Government. I am afraid it must be a very bald narration on account of the want of time. The most important is the system of correlating rents and revenue to prices, in other words the system, by which, when prices fall, rents will be decreased, and when prices rise again, the rents will be increased. That it is in very brief words. The system has been in force for the last two or three years, and I can say from my own experience that it has been of the utmost value, and since its introduction I have found it simpler and easier to collect the revenues of the Government. In fact, it has been possible to collect them with the issue of very few coercive processes. For relieving the load of debt we must provide cheap credit. There has been a committee sitting, I think, for about 1½ years in the U. P. to

can be solved. Members from the U. P. will know that there have been Agricultural Relief Bills passed which permit the Court to reopen transactions, fix instalments when passing decrees, limit periods of possessing mortgages and curtail the rates of interest. Every debtor is to receive a document of his own debt and to secure annual accounts about his loans. Many other proposals have been made by the Committee and I have no doubt they will be considered in due course of time. They made it clear that various measures were needed to provide more credit, because the co-operative societies were not able to take the place entirely of rural money-lenders. It has been proposed that arbitration tribunals should be formed in regard to loan transactions, that advances should be made by Government on a system of equated instalments for long terms and that there should be a regular debt redemption scheme. Another proposal that has been made is that there should be a scheme of compulsory saving for tenants on the lines of insurance policies.

There are many other proposals on which I need not detain the House, but I am sure they will get due consideration. This is not a case like one in which there was once trouble in a village and I deputed an official to make an enquiry. I asked the Deputy Inspector, who was the official concerned, to go to the village and see what the trouble was and try to settle it. He went to the village and two days afterwards I received a report which ended something like this. "Sir, with God's help and by your kindness I have settled the matter and cracked this Gordian knot". It is not a nut to crack, nor is it a knot to cut; it is a problem which can only be unravelled by a careful survey of the state of local conditions and by the application of remedies in various directions. There are many facets to the problem. One of the most difficult of all is the provision of sufficient staff. This, in my opinion, is a matter which can be tackled better by Local Governments than by the Government of India, though the direction of the Government of India would undoubtedly be most valuable.

Mr. T. N. Ramakrishna Reddi (Madras ceded Districts and Chittoor: Non-Muhammadian Rural): The Honourable the Finance Member, while introducing his Budget, stated that the chief duty of the Government is the maintenance of the financial stability of the country and to create conditions favourable for private enterprise. That is what we would expect from a Finance Member. But, Sir, if there was also a Member for Agriculture on the Treasury Benches, he would have stated that the primary function of any Government will be the removal of indebtedness of the agricultural population and the provision of facilities for the marketing of his products and getting better prices for the agricultural produce and in every way improving the lot of the agriculturists. But, Sir, as at present constituted, we have no Member for Agriculture . . .

Mr. G. S. Bajpai: There is a Member for Agriculture although he carries other burdens also.

Mr. T. N. Ramakrishna Reddi: He is not in this House.

Sir, in India we have been accustomed so much to depend upon the help of Government that the agriculturist has lost his initiative, and so it is the duty of the Government to come forward with schemes for ameliorating the condition of the agriculturist and improving his lot. Now, Sir, when there is cheap money in the country, that is, when any amount of money

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can be got at lower rates of interest, it is the duty of the Government to launch upon a programme of public works like irrigation, road making, etc., and to distribute the money that has been locked up in the Banks and individuals to improve the purchasing power of the rural population. Sir, reference has already been made in this House regarding the heavy indebtedness that is hanging over the heads of the agriculturists. It is estimated that the total indebtedness of the agriculturists is in the neighbourhood of 800 crores.

An Honourable Member: It was 900 crores some years ago, and it must be 1,500 crores now.

Mr. T. N. Ramakrishna Reddi: At that time, they based their figure on the results of the Banking Enquiry Committee which made its report about 1928 or 1929. We find from the U. P. Debt Enquiry Committee that it is only about seven per cent. of long term loans and 25 per cent. of short term loans that are discharged by the debtors in that Province. What exists in the U. P., we may take as a normal phenomenon existing all over the country. If that be the case, the indebtedness which existed in the year 1928 at Rs. 900 crores would have nearly doubled itself by this year, and that is only agricultural indebtedness, apart from urban indebtedness which also goes up to a very high figure. But we are concerned only with agriculturists at the present time. The Government, I am sorry to say, have not taken necessary steps to remove this appalling state of indebtedness. This indebtedness hangs very heavily on the rural population. It curbs the initiative and spirit of enterprise of the agricultural debtor and hence it indirectly has its effect upon the agricultural production of the country. Side by side with this appalling state of indebtedness, we find that the value of agricultural produce has gone down considerably. It is estimated that in the year 1929-30 the value of the total agricultural products in this country was about Rs. 1,000 crores. But in the year 1932-33, it has come to nearly 563 crores of rupees. Thus it has fallen by nearly 50 per cent. and there is any amount of scope for the improvement of the lot of agriculturists. Several Provinces have been taking some steps to remove this indebtedness. We have just heard from the previous speaker the steps that have been taken in the United Provinces. Some steps in the way of debt conciliation boards have been taken in the Central Provinces. I find that in the State of Bhavnagar, the debt conciliation board has been working very satisfactorily and the total indebtedness of that State has been reduced by one-fourth. So it is incumbent on any Government to straightaway start debt conciliation boards in each and every Province and examine each and every debt and try to reduce the debt if it has risen on account of unconscionable rates of interest. Then, it is not enough to reduce the indebtedness of the ryots. The Government should also take steps to see that the agriculturist does not again fall into the hands of his creditors and the Government should create facilities for easy credit and at the same time the credit must be made self-liquidating. This the Government may do through the agency of co-operative societies that exist in this country and also through the land mortgage banks. No doubt the Co-operative Act has been working for some years, and societies do exist, but the societies have so far failed in the discharge of the work that has been expected of them. That is due to various causes. One chief reason is that they are purely lending societies. They do not take any interest to see how that credit is spent by the debtors. The co-operative

societies must be so improved as to make them function also as agricultural societies. They must combine the function of both agriculture and co-operation, and every loan that is given from that society must be only for agricultural purposes, and the society should look to its utilisation, and that society should also take upon itself the marketing of the product and get better prices for the produce or those debtors. Some such improvement must be made in the working of these co-operative societies. They should only advance short term loans and it is only through the land mortgage banks that long term loans should be given. Government should give every help for the development of these land mortgage banks in every important place in India. There is something more which the Government ought to do to help the lot of the agriculturist. It is a notorious fact that the Indian agriculturist is very conservative and his habits and methods of cultivation are still the same as existed from time immemorial and there has not been much development in the way of agriculture. The world is moving rapidly towards scientific agriculture. Scientific research is the life blood of the economic development of a country and the other countries have forged ahead of India. In India also, we have been taking some interest of late in the advancement of scientific agriculture and we have established the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research. But beyond passing some grants for the research institution, we take very little interest afterwards and generally we do know very little of the activities of that institution.

The other day, we gave protection to the sugar industry. We have given nearly 200 per cent. protection. In spite of that, (Java has been dumping till recently her sugar in Indian markets over this high tariff wall. It is due to the fact that Java is able to produce sugar at nearly one-third or one-fourth of the cost of production in this country. Again, we are being threatened with importation of rice from Siam and Japan. My Honourable friend has not yet taken any steps so far to relieve this distressing situation. It is also due to the fact that they have been able to produce nearly double or triple the quantity of rice which the Indian agriculturist produces with his present methods of cultivation, and hence much improvement has still to be made in the methods of agriculture. India is said to be a great agricultural country, and it is a great exporter of raw products and it has got certain monopolies of production. But what do we find now? We find that there are various competitors in foreign countries to our Indian products and there are also synthetic substitutes for what we till now considered the monopoly products of India such as jute and myrabolans. We are gradually losing foreign markets. India was a great exporter of ground nuts, but we find that South Africa, America and other countries also are exporting ground nuts in larger quantities. Though it is said that the Indian ground nut has got a better oily quality, yet it has not found a very good market and its exports have been dwindling down. It is due to bad sorting and marketing and the Government have left it to the enterprise of the exporters and have not taken up seriously the question of better marketing and better sorting of these products. Then, it is also the duty of the Government to take steps to see that the prices of the products rise. They can do so by various legislative enactments. At present we find the spectacle of an export duty on rice from India in spite of the fact that foreign rice is being dumped into this country. We can have an export duty only on commodities which command a monopoly, but we have got various competitors now. Countries which were absorbing Indian rice till now have been sending rice to this country, and, in spite of this the export duty has been still maintained. Sir, the Government ought, as a first step, to remove this export duty and create better facilities for the

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export of Indian products. Then, there is the question of the freight rates. The freight rates are larger for the transporting of rice from one place to another place within the country than they are for the imports from Java to the Indian ports, and the Government should see that equitable freight rates are maintained. For all these reasons, Sir, I have great pleasure in supporting the Resolution before the House.

Hony. Captain Rao Bahadur Chaudhri Lal Chand (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, the object underlying this Resolution is a laudable one, and one could draw a graphic picture of the present condition of the agriculturist. But as my views on this subject are very well known to the House, I do not make any attempt to repeat them today. I will only refer to a remark so aptly made by Mr. Darling late Registrar of Co-operative Societies in the Punjab, and now a Commissioner of that Province. He says: "The agriculturist is born in debt, he lives in debt, and he dies in debt". Sir, I do not think I can improve upon that description and this view has been supported by the Royal Commission on Agriculture that has produced a very voluminous report. But I must admit that the Government have not been negligent of the welfare of the agriculturist so far at any rate as the Punjab peasant is concerned. We are grateful to Government for having at any rate attended to his needs ever since the last century.

It was in 1901 that the Punjab Land Alienation Act was passed, and that Act was passed after a very searching inquiry into the condition of the agriculturist. But this is an Act which has given offence to certain classes over which my friend, Bhai Parma Nand, fretted for about half an hour the other day, and I would ask him and others of his way of thinking that while the land that has been saved to us by this Act, is there, what about the produce? Ever since the passing of the Act, the land has no doubt been saved to the agriculturist and we are thankful to Government for that, but what about the produce of that land? Sir, the produce has all along been going into the hands of the money-lenders, and so we are, as it were, labourers for the money-lenders fixed upon a particular piece of land. (Hear, hear.) (Laughter.)

During the last four or five years that the depression has lasted, as was pointed out so lucidly and ably by my Honourable friend, Khan Bahadur Abdul Aziz, the Punjab Government have been trying to ameliorate the condition of the agriculturist. Huge remissions, in *abiana*, land revenue and *takavi* have been given, and, in one district alone, as was pointed out by the Honourable Member, no less than fifty lakhs have been remitted during the last four years. But although we are grateful to the Government for what they have done for us, I may point out that although the money has gone from their pockets, it has not come to us. This remission has, Sir, been practically wasted. The Agricultural Commission, so far back as 1928, held that the agriculturists were heavily in debt and that most of the debt was irrecoverable, so, at the time these remissions were so liberally made, we had more than one creditor. Government was one creditor, and they could attach our property for the arrears of land revenue or *takavi* and there were other creditors who held in their hands decrees from Civil Courts. So, under those circumstances, what did the Government do? Realising the helplessness of the poor agriculturist, they remitted their dues, and withdrew from the field of creditors and thus ceased to be creditors. but what do we gain? Sir, they only released our property to be utilised, to be attached and sold in execution of decrees in

favour of other parties. The Gujgaon district is not far off, it is only about eight or nine miles from this hall and any Honourable Member could go and see the condition of the villagers even after this remission of fifty lakhs of which my friend, Mian Abdul Aziz, was so much proud. Of course we are grateful for this to Government, but I am afraid the Government follow the line of least resistance and has not taken the fact into consideration that by this remission they were only helping the money-lender in providing him facilities to attach our property. Then, besides that, we had a very bad flood and the Government of India gave liberal grants, but owing to indebtedness, our condition has not improved. It is going down from day to day. The other day, I was having a talk on the subject with Mr. Brayne, the Rural Uplift or Reconstruction Commissioner in the Punjab, who has studied this question so thoroughly. He said that formerly people used to say:

*Uttam Kheti, Maddham ban,
Nikhad Chakri, bhik nadan.*

This means that "among the professions, agriculture came first, next came business, the third was the place given to Government servants, and last came begging", but he told me that this ought to be revised and we should read it like this:

*Uttam chakri, Maddham ban,
Nikhad kheti, bhik nadan.*

That is, "Government servants come first, business second, third comes agriculture, and then comes begging". So the plight of the
3 P. M. agriculturist has moved an officer of Mr. Brayne's standing, and he also thinks that the agriculturists are in a very bad condition.

Then, again, Khan Bahadur Mian Abdul Aziz drew attention to the fact that the educated Indians were chiefly to blame as they were not settling in the villages and there was a move from villages to towns. As I myself can be accused of that charge, I owe an explanation for this move. Sir, the explanation is this that although 90 per cent of the population live in villages, yet, in the matter of spending money for amenities, Government have been spending only ten per cent in villages and 90 per cent in towns. I will give one concrete example to illustrate my point. There is a Sanitary Board in every province. At any rate, there is one in the Punjab, I do not know about other Provinces. It provides water facilities in towns. The Rohtak town got 75 per cent. of the expenditure on waterworks from Government through that Sanitary Board. We have got a school which is just outside the municipal limits—only two miles from there—which is in the rural areas. It is a full-fledged residential High School with four or five hundred boys in it and we asked that waterworks be extended to us also. The reply was that the Sanitary Board could not give us a grant, because we were not living in a town. The result was that although within two miles there is good water available on which 75 per cent of the money has been spent by Government, yet we do not get it. The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Abdul Aziz knows all this, and I hope he will bear me out. So, as up to this time they have been giving everything to the towns and not to the villages, naturally educated people begin to move into towns. It is up to Government now to spend 90 per cent of their money, according to the population or taxation basis, on the villages and only ten per cent on the towns,

[Hon'y. Captain Rao Bahadur Chaudhri Lal Chand.]

and then you will see how the tide is turned and all of us will go back to the villages. This tendency is apparent in every walk of life. For instance, there are about 11 very good colleges in Lahore. After having all those colleges, there was no need for a Government College in that area, yet they are spending huge sums on a Government College at Lahore although in the whole of the south-east of the Punjab, in the whole of the Amritsar Division, there is not one college and they will not provide one. They can say that Lahore is an educational centre and the Government College should be located in the principal centre for education. But why should the Veterinary College be also located there? That ought to be in the Hissar district which is the home of cattle. There has been a tendency on the part of the Government to spend money on towns, and, therefore, there is this move. The Honourable Khan Bahadur Mian Abdul Aziz very rightly quoted from the opinion of the Agricultural Commission in support of his argument. I wish he had quoted other things which the Agricultural Commission recommended and to which Government have not up to this time paid any attention to our knowledge. Take, for instance, paragraph 364, from which, with your permission, Sir, I will read only a small portion:

"The importance of the co-operative movement is accentuated by the comparative failure of legislative measures designed to deal with the problem of indebtedness to achieve their objects. We received evidence in Burma that the provisions of the Civil Procedure Code exempting the cattle, implements and produce of agriculturists from sale may be ignored by the courts. We have mentioned that the Kamiauti Agreements Act in Bihar and Orissa has proved ineffective. The provisions of the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act are being evaded and the Usurious Loans Act is practically a dead letter in every province in India."

After having read this, it was up to the Government of India to substitute effective Acts for all these dead letters.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The Honourable Member must conclude soon.

Hon'y. Captain Rao Bahadur Chaudhri Lal Chand: I will draw attention only to those provisions of the law which are there and which are being ignored by Courts. Section 60 of the Civil Procedure Code lays down certain exemptions. I will not read them here. They are well known to all Honourable Members, whereby implements of agriculture, seed, grain and cattle houses and the cattle are exempt from attachment in execution of decrees. As I have been practising in mufassil Courts, I find that all these articles, every one of them, have been attached and are being attached by Courts and section 60 is being ignored. Then, there was section 61 of the Civil Procedure Code. At the time when this Code was enacted, this Legislature left it to the Provincial Governments to frame rules for the exemption of produce for the maintenance of the family of the agriculturist up to the next harvest. But up to this time no Government, except perhaps the United Provinces, have framed any rules under this section, and, therefore, it remains a dead letter.

Then, Sir, further on, the Agricultural Commission recommended that irrecoverable debts should be wiped out. It is perfectly reasonable that irrecoverable debts should not be persisted in, and any instalment, that might be fixed for that debt, will only perpetuate it. Therefore, they

recommended the passing of simple Insolvency Laws. From paragraph 364 to paragraph 367, they have gone at length on this point and they have come to the conclusion that simple insolvency laws may be considered by Provincial Governments. But except the Bombay Government, so far as I know, no Government have taken any action on these lines. So, I submit that the Government of India have got enough material to go upon, and, therefore, they can proceed on that material. The object of the Resolution is a laudable one, but the duty for Committees and for Commissioners is gone. People are in a very bad plight. The time for action has come and no useful purpose will be served by any Committee. We do not want to add another volume to the Library of Academic Discussion. Therefore, I hope the Honourable the Mover will withdraw his Resolution.

Kawab Major Malik Talib Mehdi Khan (North Punjab: Muhammadan). Sir, the problem of agricultural distress is one of the seriousness of which, I may be permitted to say, has not been fully realised. It is of vital importance to nearly 80 per cent of the population of India.

[At this stage, Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty) vacated the Chair which was then occupied by Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Abdul Matin Chaudhury).]

Its seriousness was first brought to notice by the Banking Inquiry Committee which estimated that the agricultural debt of India amounted to nearly ten crores. This calculation was arrived at four or five years ago, and it would not be wide of the mark if we add another three or four crores to it, that is to say, it has amounted to 14 or 15 crores. There is no doubt that the Provincial Governments have done everything possible to solve this problem, but, whenever the necessary measures were brought before the Legislature, they were met with such opposition on the part of the money-lenders that the Government which are always afraid of the press agitation had them greatly whittled down, and when they eventually emerged from the Committee stage, they lost half their value. Therefore, it is not wrong to say that most of them were half-hearted measures, and their actual working proved beyond doubt that they were so. We have got the Usury Laws in force in various Provinces. Regulation of Money-lenders' Accounts and other such Acts, but they are all practically a dead letter. Recently the Muzis held meetings in Khanawal (District Multan) and other places to oppose the new agriculturist debt law put up by the Punjab Government; and it is clear from the Resolutions passed there that one section of the public which represents the money-lenders would not like that the poor debtor should have breathing time or that he may be able to get rid of some of his debts. At the same time, we are very grateful to the Government for so kindly remitting lakhs and lakhs of rupees at the time of each harvest when they find that the people are not in a position to pay their dues. Government also advance lakhs of rupees by way of *takari* loans to the ryots; they not only advance these loans, but they also make huge remissions whenever there is necessity for it, as was just now pointed by Mian Abdul Aziz, the Commissioner of the Ambala Division. But we have to see what our friends, the money-lenders, have done to lighten the burden of the ryots. I would advise the future Superintendents of Census to add a column to their statements to show the number of persons who lived in villages, accumulated wealth there, built palatial buildings and then went

[Nawab Major Malik Talib Mehdi Khan.]

away to towns to carry on their enormous business by the funds which they brought with them from the villages. It will show that most of the persons who are now living in towns and running factories originally belonged to the villages, and it was there that they collected funds by which they are now carrying on their lucrative business in the towns. I would advise the *sahucars* and the Government as well that it is time that they realise the gravity of the problem.

Sir, with the life of the zamindar is bound the stability of the Government and the existence of the *sahucars*; in his death lies the death, at any rate, of the *sahucars* and immense increase in the anxiety of the Government. We are all in one boat, and if it flounders, it must carry down with it all that it contains. The zamindar has reached a point which is so aptly portrayed in a Persian proverb which says:

"Chun abuz an guzast; che neza wa che balisht.";

which means that once the water goes over one's head, it does not matter whether it assumes the height of a spear or a lance. I wish my friends who lend money to the zamindars realised their position, which is that the former's prosperity is tied up with the welfare of the latter.

My friend, Mr. Joshi, has tried to inculcate his ideas of socialism. He advocated his principles on a former occasion also, and I was able to refute them. Human nature being what it is, no distribution by the people can change the condition of things. It is admitted on all hands that the welfare of the landlord lies in the welfare of his tenant. I know the landlord of the Punjab advances money to the tenant, gives him animals, ploughing tackle and other implements without charging any interest, and recovers it in kind, whenever the tenant is in a position to pay it. Thus, it is evident that the relation of the landlord and the tenant is satisfactory.

My next point is that the village has been brought to such a condition that no improvements can be effected in it easily. It has got no means of communication, no medical relief; it wants sanitation, and is in need of education. Major-General Megaw, who was Director-General of the Indian Medical Service, made a statement the other day, which was reproduced in most of the Indian papers that fifty per cent of the people were below par in their health. It is really a very serious problem, and we ought to see what are the causes of it. If a man has a sword always hanging over his head like the sword of Damocles, he will always feel depressed. As the zamindar, who has no means of removing his burden, and every day gets deeper and deeper into the debt. He is unable to raise his head. He is denied the necessities of life, which a civilized person requires and this accounts for the deterioration of his health. I look to my friends on this side, who are all enjoying the best of advantages in towns and big places, to bestow some attention on this problem, because it was the hard labour of the poor villager which provided means to my friends to thrive in towns.

Many Commissions have been held and measures adopted most of which were devoted to the industrial development of the country and the improvement of the conditions of industrial labour. I do not know what is the definition of labour. Personally I would say that a labourer is one who works with his own hands to gain his livelihood. If it is correct, then I

do not understand why a differentiation should be made between an agricultural labourer and an industrial labourer. For the former they are making provisions for saving them from indebtedness, providing them with good houses, medical relief, education for their children and all sorts of amenities of life. They are given only a fixed number of hours to work in the factories. Unlike his fortunate brother, the zamindar must get up at three or four in the morning and work till midnight, there are no fixed hours for him, no one cares about his food or where he lives and whether his sons are properly educated. There is no water supply for him and he has got a very small share of what are called the necessaries of life. He deserves something to be done to ameliorate his lot. The Provincial Governments, I must admit, are doing it, but their resources are after all limited, and they cannot go as far as the case requires. Consequently, the first thing that we have got to do is to find out all the causes which contribute to the distress or indebtedness of the zamindars. I do not mind what machinery is applied but I must say that a huge Royal Commission is not needed, because the country cannot afford it. If there is to be a Committee, it must be a small committee consisting of those officers who have worked in districts assisted by one or two zamindars from each Province. They might go about and find out the causes which have brought about this condition of affairs.

Mr. Gava Prasad Singh (Muzaffarpur *cum* Champaran: Non-Muhamadan): Do you realise what will be the size of the Committee as you suggest?

Nawab Major Malik Talib Mehdi Khan: They can have co-opted members. If they go to Bihar, my friend, Mr. Muswood Ahmad, will be one of them. and if they come to the Punjab, I will have the honour of going with them. And when they have found out the cause, they can also suggest means for ameliorating it. With these words, I support the Resolution

Mr. Uppi Saheb Bahadur (West Coast and Nilgiris: Muhammadan): Sir, this Resolution is of very great importance. it is of first rate importance to us, because ours is a country of agriculturists and the prosperity of the country mainly depends on the prosperity of the agriculturists. For the last two years or so a depression has come upon the country which is perhaps unprecedented in history. People have been voicing forth the situation in those parts of the country from where they hail. I hail from a very remote part of India. and in that part of the country, I read in a local newspaper day before yesterday, the collection of rent is going on and the collection of taxes and assessment is going on. As the people are unable to pay the demands, the landholders and cultivators are running away and hiding from the village officers. Their properties are being attached and sold. There is nobody to defend them, they are not able to pay up the remaining one *kist* of the assessment. They have sold all their property within the last few months to pay up each instalment. so much so, for the last instalment they are not able to find means to pay the demand of the Government officials. It is even said that crops are standing in the fields. The village officers are attaching them and also attaching household property, and that is the situation there.

We have been crying in this House and outside asking Government to look towards Malabar and save us from the dire distress that is facing us. You can imagine, Sir, the situation of a country which is mainly

[Mr. Uppi Saheb Bahadur.]

agricultural and depends mainly upon cocoanuts as its mainstay when the price which was ranging between 40 and 50 till 1929 has come down to 12 and 15. The price of pepper which is another source of income in Malabar has fallen from 600 to 120 and 130. That is the position. At the same time, the Provincial Government are going on increasing the taxes. In the last 1½ years, people have been crying to stop the resettlement for the time being, but the Government are going on merrily taxing the people. You will see how inhuman the Provincial Government were when you hear how they collect the new taxes and survey charges. The lands were surveyed behind the back of the people who did not know what the Government were doing. They went to survey after a year or so. Last year, they came forward with a demand at the rate of 10, 11 and 12 annas per acre. The people could not pay and they appealed to relent, but the Government did not yield for a moment. They attached and sold property, attached standing crops, without even allowing time to the people to collect their dues. That is the kind of feeling which the Government have for the people. The Government could have allowed one or two years for the people to pay up small dues.

Sir, within the last one or two years, the Government of India have imposed on the people new taxes up to a tune of 45 crores, and 80 per cent of this money has to come from the pockets of the agriculturists. At the same time, what have the Government done to improve the economic condition of the agriculturist? So far as I know, they passed an Act for stopping the import of foreign wheat into India. People have been crying to reduce the cost of freights for rice between various parts of India. Government have been giving assurances from time to time, but so far they have done nothing to accede to this demand. The people from Malabar have been crying that a foreign competitor has come into the field and captured the Indian market in the matter of cocoanuts, the main agricultural produce of Malabar. It is the Government that have been responsible for allowing this foreign raw material to come into this country. The Government of Ceylon took adequate measures to protect their agriculturists. Is it not the duty of our Government also to see that our agriculturists are protected? Is it not in the interests of this Government to see that the raw material produced in this country is used in this country before they allow foreign materials to come in and compete with our interests? They imposed some sort of import duty before. But it was not so much in the interests of India, if I may say so, as in the interests of somebody else. The European and foreign markets wanted cheap cocoanuts and they found that Ceylon was a large cocoanut producing country. But so far as India is concerned, Indian cocoanut had a market in India itself, and the foreigners had to compete with Indian market. In order to have Ceylon cocoanut and copra for themselves, they persuaded this Government to impose an import duty on the Ceylon produce. The Government did that and helped them. Now, the foreign countries do not want Ceylon copra; or, if they buy, it is in very small, infinitesimally small quantities. When the Government of India found that the foreign markets did not want any more Ceylon copra, they removed the export duty—I do not say that they entirely removed it, but reduced the value to a minimum—from Rs. 23 to Rs. 10 or Rs. 9. From last year, we have been asking the Government to give us some protection by not allowing foreign goods to come in, but the only result of our cries and representations was that the Government of India in January last reduced it again by

one rupee. The result is that owing to the lowering of the import duty, they are underselling us now. It is impossible for us to compete with the foreign cocoanuts. We have been helping the people of Northern India and of the Punjab in the matter of wheat: we have been paying for it, in fact, in the shape of the higher import duty. It is, therefore, right that they should be generous to us also and purchase only the Indian product. One of the arguments put forward is that Ceylon purchases our rice. But Ceylon lately has been purchasing cheaper rice from Siam and other places. They have not actually refused to buy Indian rice, but they have been purchasing cheaper stuff from other countries. You cannot stop that; they also say that Ceylon is a big purchaser of our cotton goods. Compare the value of cotton goods purchased by Malabar and by Ceylon. Ceylon purchases about 23 lakhs rupees worth, but Malabar and Travancore purchase about 136 lakhs rupees worth of cotton goods. If Ceylon does not purchase our cotton goods, we in Malabar guarantee that we will purchase that 23 lakhs worth of goods if you will help us to keep out Ceylon cocoanut. Instead of purchasing Japanese goods, we will purchase Bombay goods. If the Government have imposed this extra taxation to the tune of Rs. 45 crores shutting their eyes to the dire economic distress in the country, throughout its length and breadth, I do not know what is going to happen. With these words, I support the Resolution.

Rao Bahadur B. L. Patil (Bombay Southern Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, it seems that the agriculturist is on the brains of many Honourable Members. Certainly that is a very good sign for the country. But I think the reason seems to be that the growing poverty of the agriculturist has affected every pocket. It has affected the revenue of the Government; therefore, the Government are in a mood to say a few sympathetic words; it has affected the pockets of the lawyers; it has affected the income of the business men; perhaps in my humble opinion that is the reason why everybody has opened his eyes and feels for the agriculturist.

Coming to the Resolution, I should like to remark that the debate for these two days has been almost of a rambling character. It would have been better had some Honourable Members put forth certain grievances and concrete proposals as coming forth from the non-official Benches, and Government would have been in a much better position to pay their attention to them. However, as far as I can see, coming from rural parts of my Presidency, I should like to place before the Honourable House and also before the Government some important matters to which they can pay, I should say, practical attention. Many things have been said on the floor of the House in the course of the debate and I think it will be very difficult for Government to pay due attention to all of them. Probably they will give a suitable reply and do nothing more.

We can divide the question of the agriculturist into three divisions: the first is what can we do for his better living? I can suggest two things: the most important thing for his better living is, his drinking water. He does not get potable water in many places.

The second one is medical aid. I do not want to suggest to Government that medical aid should be taken to the house of every peasant. What I suggest is this. We know that in this country lakhs of people suffer from malaria and that every year it takes a toll of thousands of human lives in every Province. It is the primary duty of the Government, therefore, to combat this dreadful disease which generally affects the rural parts.

[Rao Bahadur B. L. Patil.]

Then, the next thing regarding the agriculturist, in my humble opinion, is with regard to his profession. I should like to make two concrete suggestions. Government ought to pay more attention to provide the agriculturist with better and selected varieties of seeds. From my own personal experience in my Province, I venture to say, Sir, that it is very difficult for the agriculturist to obtain the right type of seeds, like sugar cane, cotton, potatoes, and so on.

Then, I think marketing facilities ought to be provided. That has been already dealt with and I do not wish to dwell on that aspect of the question at length.

The third question which I should like to discuss is about his finances, and here I can suggest two things. The first thing to be done is that land mortgage banks should be established throughout the country and the indebtedness of the agriculturist should be reduced in the first instance. The second suggestion is that, instead of paying more attention to the credit side of the co-operative movement, we should pay greater attention to the non-credit side of the co-operative movement.

Then, Sir, with regard to the legislation that can be undertaken on behalf of the agriculturists, I would place two things in the forefront. It is high time for Government to take up some legislation to check usurious loans. Secondly, it is also high time for Government to undertake some legislation with regard to tenancies.

Then, Sir, there is also another thing to which I should like to draw the attention of the Government, and that is the system of giving suspensions and remissions in the Provinces. I can only say that the present system is imperfect and it calls for a speedy and radical revision.

Sir, without taking any more time of the House, I commend my suggestions to the Government.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh: Sir, the subject matter of this Resolution has been threshed out so thoroughly that I feel I shall not be justified in taking more than two or three minutes of the time of this House. I should like to refer to one or two observations which were made by the Honourable the Official Member from the Punjab, Mr. Abdul Aziz. If I remember aright, he said that the fertility of the lands was the same as it was some time back. This is a very disputable point in my opinion. As Honourable Members know, bones of animals are great fertilisers for the fields and it is a fact that thousands and thousands of tons of bones, either crushed or otherwise, are being exported from India every year. This results in impairing to a very great extent the fertility of the soil. This is a point which, if the Committee which is suggested in this Resolution is appointed, can go into.

There is another point. In ancient times we used to have a lot of trees and forests in and around the villages. That afforded the much needed moisture to the fields, and that was also an element which tended to increase the fertility of the land. Now, with the pressure on agricultural land, with the increase in population, de-forestation has been going on at a rapid pace, and that also, in my humble view, has contributed to a large extent in impairing the fertility of the soil. By the mere efflux of time, the fertility of the soil has a tendency of getting deteriorated, but with these additional elements, I think the fertility of the soil is bound to deteriorate more rapidly. As Honourable

Members who come from rural areas know that land in these days does not yield the same amount of grain which it used to in olden days, and it is with a view to improving the produce that improved methods of cultivation have been adopted and agricultural institutions have also been started in several places to impart agricultural education to the people, like those at Coimbatore, Pusa and other places. This is a point which has to be carefully looked into,—I mean whether the fertility of the soil is the same as it was before, or it has deteriorated, which, I think, is the case.

Then, my friend went on to point out that the number of cattle is the same as it was some years ago. I do not know if I have been able to catch my friend correctly, but that is also a point in dispute. Thousands and thousands of cattle are being slaughtered, and the hides and skins are being taken out and exported from this country, with the result that cattle which is the wealth of an agricultural country, is deteriorating both in point of number as well as quality, though the institutions which are run by the Government and also private enterprise are trying to do what they can to improve the breed and quality of the cattle in this country.

Then, Sir, mention was also made of the prices of agricultural commodities. With the world wide depression and other causes, the prices of agricultural commodities have declined very considerably, and it is in the interests of the agriculturists that the prices of commodities should rise and that the people should get a fair value for the produce of their lands. At present it is the experience of the agriculturists that the money which is spent in raising a crop cannot be recovered from the sale of the produce of the land, because the prices of produce have gone down so considerably, and with it the purchasing power of the people.

Then, Sir, the question of agricultural indebtedness is also a very important point for consideration. The deep and the deepening poverty of the people of India has been referred to by various writers and speakers from the time of the Indian National Congress, from the time of William Digby and others, and I do not know if any effective steps have so far been taken by Government to tackle this most important agricultural problem.

Land revenue is being realised without any consideration to the capacity of the people to pay it. I will mention the case of my own Province of Bihar which has recently suffered so terribly from the earthquake. The most serious problem in Bihar at present is the vast amount of sand that has been deposited as a result of the earthquake, from the bowels of the earth. This is not an easy or even an ephemeral phase of the question. I had been to my place only the other day, and I saw with my own eyes thousands and thousands of acres of land under sand. It is very difficult for the agriculturists to clear the sands and to make the lands as fertile as they were before. My Honourable friend, Mr. B. Das, who has got very implicit faith in Government communiqués whispers that the Government communiqué says that the lands can be reclaimed. I do not say that the lands cannot be reclaimed, but those of us who come from my own Province know how difficult it is to reclaim these lands unaided by Government. It may be quite easy for my Honourable friend, Mr. B. Das,

[Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh.]

living at a safe distance to speak in that tone, but those of us who realise the seriousness of the situation know how difficult it is to tackle this problem successfully

Mr. M. Maswood Ahmad: The Government communiqués say that 90 per cent is all right.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh: I do not know whether my Honourable friends have got implicit faith in all the communiqués issued by the Government. But I, coming from my Province, say that if the Government of Bihar say that 90 per cent of the lands can be easily brought under cultivation, I shall welcome that idea, but I have my own doubts about it. The Government of Bihar and Orissa, I am afraid, have not been as generous as they ought to have been in understanding and tackling the serious situation that has arisen in my Province as a result of the earthquake. However, Sir, this is a point which I need not labour; it is a point which has got special reference to my own Province.

Mr. Jadhav, if I remember aright, in the course of his speech referred to the different systems of land tenures and land settlements prevailing in the different parts of the country. For instance, he referred to the permanent settlement in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, and the ryotwari tenure obtaining in Bombay and other Presidencies, and so on, and it was probably on that account that he opposed the formation of a central committee to go into this question. As has been suggested by some speakers, a central committee might be appointed with power to co-opt members of various Provinces when they go and tour in their respective territories. But, frankly speaking, I doubt as to whether the present is quite the opportune time for the establishment of a committee like this, and my doubt is strengthened by the fact that in the Resolution the committee is proposed to consist of officials, experts and Members of the Assembly. As we all know we are on the eve of dissolution of this House and the formation of a new Assembly. I do not think that at such a time as this it would be quite appropriate to associate Members of this House with a committee of that sort. Besides, it is such a vast problem that I do not think it would be possible to tackle it on the eve of Constitutional Reforms. The peasants of a country, as we know, form the backbone of the nation, and their condition, economic and otherwise, should be the first concern of a responsible Government. As an English poet has said—

“Bold peasantry is a country's pride,
When once destroyed can never be supplied.”

I would not like to commit myself to the terms of the original Resolution which recommends the appointment of a committee consisting of officials, experts and Members of the Assembly. I should like to give preference to the amendment which is sought to be substituted in place of the original Resolution. The question of agricultural produce is one which ought to receive the very serious attention of the Government. For instance the question of supplying improved seeds and seedlings of wheat, rice and sugar-cane has, in my opinion, not received as much practical amount of importance as it ought to have received. Institutions at Coimbatore and Pusa, for instance, are making a lot of investigations into the matter, but so far as the actual agriculturists are concerned, I am

afraid, they have not been afforded the full benefit of the results of the investigations carried on in those institutions. I do not lay the entire blame on the shoulders of the Government. The conservatism of the agriculturists is one item which prevents the people from taking to innovations of a novel kind to which they have not been accustomed before. Agricultural implements, for instance, are also a matter which is very closely connected with the question of agricultural population in this country. Our agriculturists have been using from time immemorial those old implements to which they have been accustomed from the time of their forefathers. It is necessary, under the new condition of things, to introduce new methods for the tilling of the soil and for other agricultural purposes. I do not know how far Government have been able to help the agriculturists in this matter. Sometimes we have exhibitions in which agricultural implements are shown by way of demonstration to the people, but these are few and far between and I am afraid that that produces very small effect on the agriculturists so far as their innovations are concerned. Some friends have gone very elaborately into the question of improving the lot of the agriculturists, and I do not propose to traverse the same ground over again. It will be the function of the committee to find out the causes of the present depressed condition of the agriculturists and to devise remedies. I quite agree with some of my Honourable friends who have said that the question of giving protection to some of the industries in this country has been coming up very frequently before this House. I do not grudge whatever legitimate protection may be given to the deserving national industries of this country. But I would like strongly to emphasise the point that, agriculture being the very mainstay of the bulk of the people, the interests of the agriculturists ought to receive very serious consideration at the hands of the Government. I do not know what reply the Government Member would give to the Resolution. As I have already stated, I find some sort of inappropriateness in pressing this Resolution at the present juncture, but I hope that my Honourable friend, Mr. Bajpai, who is going to reply to this debate will give some sort of assurance which might allay whatever feelings of suspicion there might be lurking in our hearts that the interests of the agriculturists do not receive as careful and earnest consideration at the hands of the Government as some other industries receive. These are the points which I had got to say on this subject.

Mr. G. S. Bajpai: Mr. Deputy President, in the first place I owe an apology to my slumbering friend on my left for disturbing his repose. I shall try for his benefit to moderate the intensity of my voice as much as possible. (Laughter.)

This debate started nearly two months ago. There has been this long interval, and today many Honourable Members have taken part in the discussion. If I were to attempt to show to each one of them the courtesy of devoting at least two minutes to their remarks, I would exhaust the forty minutes which is the maximum that is allowed by your grace to a speaker on behalf of the Government when replying to a Resolution. I can only assure Honourable Members that, if I do not specifically deal with all the points, no discourtesy is meant but that the limitations of time make it necessary to deal only with essentials.

Now, turning to these essentials, let me, in the first place, congratulate my Honourable friend, the Mover of this Resolution, for bringing up this

[Mr. G. S. Bajpai.]

important topic, and if Mr. Reddi were here, I would assure him at once that I was not going to take shelter behind the constitutional position and say that inasmuch as Land Revenue is a reserved provincial subject and Agriculture is a transferred provincial subject, therefore the Government of India can fold their hands and let all these matters take their course and shape in such ways as destiny would fashion.

Hony. Captain Rao Bahadur Chaudhri Lal Chand: Is not Industry a transferred provincial subject?

Mr. G. S. Bajpai: I do not quite follow the point of the interruption of my Honourable friend whether Industry is not a provincial transferred subject. I am stating that Land Revenue is a reserved provincial subject, that is provincial, though reserved, and Agriculture is also a provincial subject, though transferred, but we quite recognise the force of the remark of my Honourable friend, Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliar, namely, that without attempting to infringe the autonomy of the Provinces there is a great deal that the Government of India and the Provincial Governments can do in concert in order to further the prosperity of this country.

Sir, as regards agriculture, it has been said by more than one speaker that it is the mainstay of this country. Let me say that we are on common ground as regards that. Honourable Members who sit on these Benches recognise that just as much as Honourable Members who sit opposite. Report after report and book after book has referred to the 70, 80 or 90 per cent of the population of this country who directly or indirectly subsist on land and agricultural operations, and it is hardly conceivable, therefore, that any Government could assign to agriculture a secondary place in its affections or a secondary place in its policy. But, Sir, when I have made this confession of belief or faith, namely, that Government recognise the importance of agriculture, I would venture to join issue with my Honourable friend, the Mover of the Resolution, as to the effectiveness of the proposed method, namely, investigation by a committee for carrying out our sympathetic ideas and intentions. Honourable Members are aware that there has been a Royal Commission on Agriculture. It took more than two years or nearly two years to complete that work and cost us more than 14 lakhs of rupees. There has been a Banking Inquiry Committee since. Other investigations are afoot. Surely we do not want to shelve this question which needs action by referring points which are already known for investigation to another committee. The essential fact is this, that the causes of the present agricultural distress are well-known. There has been this world depression with its catastrophic fall in the prices of primary commodities, a fall which has been greater in proportion than the fall in prices of manufactured goods. Two results follow from that; first that the agriculturist has a much smaller margin left for purchasing those necessities which he has to buy in the shape of manufactured goods; secondly, that the burden on his fixed monetary charges, be it land revenue which is paid to Government, or be it the interest and principal that he pays to his creditors, that the margin left for them is either practically non-existent or completely inadequate to his requirements.

Now, Sir, I should like to describe, as briefly as I can, what Local Governments have done so far to deal with these two problems, namely,

the problem of the payments which are due to them and then the question of the payments which are due to the creditor. On the first question I need only quote a few striking figures as regards remissions and suspensions of land revenue. I take the United Provinces for example. In 1931-32, out of a total land revenue demand of 7.27 crores, they remitted a sum of 1.25 crores. In 1932-33 out of a total land revenue demand of 7.49 crores, they remitted more and 49 lakhs. Take another Province, the Punjab. Out of a total land revenue payment of 4.49 crores in 1932-33, they remitted a sum of 45 lakhs and 73 thousand. In 1931-32, out of a total land revenue demand of 4.16 crores, they remitted a sum of a crore and 15 lakhs. Other Provinces perhaps have not given remissions to the same extent but it may be that their local circumstances did not require the same generosity of treatment.

Mr. M. Maswood Ahmad: What is the remission given in Bihar?

Mr. G. S. Bajpai: My Honourable friend is perfectly aware that Bihar is a permanently settled Province and the revenue taken there is absolutely out of all proportion even to the reduced prices of agricultural commodities that prevail today.

Mr. Sitakanta Mahapatra: What about Orissa?

Mr. G. S. Bajpai: I can give my Honourable friend the figures for Orissa also, but it seems to me that in the time which is available to me, I should go on to more important points than the elucidation of past history as to how much has been given by way of remission of land revenue in every Province in India.

Now, my friend, Mr. Mudaliar, pointed out the other day that this remission of revenue was only a palliative. In other words, it does not provide a permanent remedy for this problem of the fall in agricultural prices which, for aught one knows, may last indefinitely. There, again, the Local Governments have not been idle. The Government of the Province from which I come has evolved a formula which provides for an automatic adjustment of the rent and revenue demand to fluctuations in prices. What other Provinces will do in the light of what has been done in the United Provinces I am not able to say, but I can assure my Honourable friends here that the Conference of provincial representatives which has been sitting in another part of this very building for the last four days has been exchanging ideas, merely with a view to enabling each provincial representative to see for himself what can be done in his Province on the lines of what has been done or accomplished in other Provinces in connection with this very difficult question.

I pass on now from the problem of the obligation of the agriculturist to the Government to the obligation of the agriculturist to his creditor. Now, Sir, that, as everybody will admit, is an extraordinary difficult problem. On one extreme there is the suggestion to repudiate all these debts. Now, Sir, expropriation may be very attractive to those who are not to be expropriated immediately, but on the other hand it is a most extraordinary, and dangerous precedent to set up. Today it may be the turn of the money-lenders to be expropriated. Tomorrow it may be the turn of somebody else to be expropriated. Where are you going to stop? The process will go on, and I do not think even those, who

[Mr. G. S. Bajpai.]

pay dreamy allegiance to the Nihilistic economic doctrines of Russia, will be prepared to embark upon a policy of wholesale or progressive expropriation. That, Sir, being the position, namely, that expropriation is not to be attempted, some remedy has to be found. You have to recognise the fact that the co-operative movement, though it was started with great hopes in the country, has not met with the measure of success that its sponsors expected.

Mr. B. Das: That is a fair admission on the part of the Honourable Member.

Mr. G. S. Bajpai: I think I am nothing if not fair in my presentation of a case. The expectation of the sponsors of the co-operative movement in regard to what it can accomplish for short term credit and for intermediate credit and for long term credit has not been realised. That being so, one has to recognise that if you go too far and deal in a drastic manner with existing debt, you run the risk of completely drying up the sources of credit to the agriculturist. Is that going to help him? No. Very well, then you have to find a balanced solution, a solution which will satisfy the agriculturist and at the same time be fair to his creditor. In regard to that, I have been greatly enlightened and instructed by what I have heard in the course of the discussions that have been going on in that Conference. I find that it is not one solitary Government which is engaged upon the consideration of this all important problem; that exploration and investigation has proceeded apace in more than one Province. In the United Provinces, I believe, on the ninth of this month a legislative Session will be started which will deal with no less than four measures designed to deal with the problem of agricultural indebtedness. In the Central Provinces, the principle of settling debts by conciliation has already found expression in statutory form and they also have other legislation in view. The same is the case in the Punjab. We hope that in the light of the discussions that have taken place in this Conference, the experience of others will be utilised by those Provinces that have not taken any initiative so far, to see how far it can be adapted to their own requirements, because it is a matter, not merely of common knowledge, but I think it is generally admitted that the problem of the indebtedness of the agriculturist goes to the very root of the whole question of his prosperity, and because, unless and until this heavy burden of his indebtedness has been satisfactorily dealt with, it is hardly likely that we shall be able to increase or improve his purchasing power. Now, I have dealt with what I consider to be the field of operations of the Local Governments,—land revenue and irrigation charges on the one hand and agricultural indebtedness on the other. I shall now come to the part of the Central Government in this programme of relieving agricultural distress.

The Honourable the Finance Member, Sir, in his Budget speech made a very elaborate survey of what could be attempted and what has already been attempted by the Government of India in that direction consistently with the limitations that are placed upon us under the Constitution. Now, I should like briefly to recapitulate and in some ways, if I may, supplement the classification which he adopted for explaining the efforts of the Government of India. I think, Sir, that the Government of India have

taken steps under six heads to deal with this problem. The first head is that of the policy of discriminating protection. It has had a two-fold effect. If you take the cotton industry, for example, the protection that has been given has, by increasing the purchasing power of a certain section of the community, increased the demand for our own agricultural commodities here. More directly, there has been a protection for agricultural commodities themselves. Wheat is an instance in point. My Honourable friend, Diwan Baladiah Lanaswami Mudaliar, would, I take it, question me as to what is happening as regards rice. The position, as I explained the other day, is fundamentally different in regard to rice inasmuch as we are not an importing country, but, including Burma, an exporting country. Therefore, the problem of rice is different. Nevertheless, we have made representations even on that subject to the powers who are our competitors and I hope that, before the end of the Session, I may be in a position to inform Honourable Members as to what measure of success these representations have achieved, at least we shall leave no stone unturned to get those negotiations concluded as rapidly as possible. But to go on with the policy of protection, there is another crop which has received the benefit of that policy—I refer to sugar-cane. The next remedy which the Government of India have adopted in order to deal with this problem is that of trade agreements. The Ottawa Agreement was referred to the other day by the Honourable the Finance Member and figures were quoted by him to show the improvement in the exports of rice and of linseed from this country to the United Kingdom under the operation of that Agreement. Then we hope, now that we are carrying on negotiations with the Irish Free State and as a result of other negotiations with other empire countries that may be started, that all that is possible will be done to find markets for our agricultural produce in those parts of the empire. There is also the agreement with Japan which has had the effect of securing a stable market at least for a portion of our output of cotton. The third thing which the Government of India have undertaken is the improvement of the quality of our produce through research. I need not at this stage say very much about the activities of the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research. Honourable Members will be meeting the Vice-Chairman and experts of the Council in a few days from now. If they will attend these meetings they will be able to learn and assess what is being done there. The fourth is the organization of commercial intelligence. Honourable Members are aware of the good work which our Trade Commissioners abroad are doing. We found that our internal organization of commercial intelligence was not what modern conditions required. A central Department of Commercial Intelligence has already been set up and the Robertson-Bowley inquiries are also directed towards perfecting from the bottom upwards the collection and the classification and the presentation of statistics. We hope that that is also going to make its contribution to the common stream of advancing prosperity to the agriculturist.

Next comes the question of freights. The Honourable the Commerce Member, in dealing with the Railway Budget, the other day, made a statement as to what had been done already in regard to wheat, and, between certain termini, in regard to rice. My Honourable friend, the Financial Commissioner for Railways, undertook to look into the question of the transport of rice from Bihar to the Punjab. Personally I do not anticipate much result from that investigation, because my information is that as regards rice Bihar is a deficit Province. (*Voices*: "No, no.")

[Mr G. S. Bajpai.]

However, I hope all the same that he will be able to give some satisfaction to my Honourable friend, Mr. Maswood Ahmad. I have now, Sir, as briefly as I could, attempted to give an account of what the Local Governments have done and are doing and what the Government of India have done and are doing.

The question of marketing has been raised by more than one Honourable Member. It is recognized that grading, stapling, and bulking, indeed marketing generally are very important questions. In regard to that also, I announced to the House the other day that the employment of a marketing expert had already been decided upon, and we hope that that will also have its effect upon the task of economic rehabilitation.

I think, Sir, that it is not necessary for me now to detain the House with any more elaborate statistics or arguments. I do hope that in what I have said I have been able to convey to the House an idea of what we ourselves are convinced of, namely, that neither the Government of India nor the Provincial Governments are dormant in this matter, that they are not deserting, and that they are doing all they can, consistently with their resources and with the complexities of the problem to advance the cause of agriculture. My Honourable friend's object, I believe, was to draw attention to the importance of this subject. I think that the number of speeches that have already been made and the interest which this discussion has aroused must have satisfied my Honourable friend that Government have been reminded—not that they needed to be reminded—of the weight and importance which the House attaches to this all-important question.

I shall merely repeat what I said before that there is no need for a committee of enquiry, because the causes of the distress are well-known and the duty of remedying these difficulties is being discharged steadily, and I hope it will be discharged successfully. I shall beg of my Honourable friend, if he will agree, on my presentation of the case, to withdraw his Resolution.

Before I resume my seat, there is one word which I should like to say to my Honourable friend, Mr. Thampan, and one or two others who seemed to postulate some inherent and unappeasable conflict between industry and agriculture. May I submit to them with all respect that, far from there being a conflict between these two, there is a vital harmony. In a phrase made famous by Sir Syed Ahmad—I will apply his metaphor to this particular case—industry and agriculture may be described for this country as the lotus eyes of a lovely maiden. You cannot hurt the one without marring the beauty of the face. So please do not go on emphasising a conflict which does not exist, except in the minds of the biased. (Applause.)

[At this stage, Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty) resumed the Chair.]

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad: May I ask a question? Will the Honourable Member be pleased to tell us what steps the Government of India have taken or propose to take to raise the price level of the agricultural produce as they are doing in the case of the manufactured articles?

Mr. G. S. Bajpai: So far as that particular question is concerned, I shall refer my Honourable friend to the relevant paragraphs of the financial statement made by the Honourable the Finance Member in this House on the 27th February.

Mr. B. Das: May I ask the Honourable Member what has been the result of the Conference of the provincial representatives? Have they appreciated the indebtedness of the agriculturists?

Mr. G. S. Bajpai: The Conference not having yet finished, my Honourable friend will agree that the results are not yet available even to the members of the Conference itself. As regards their appreciation of the problem of indebtedness, I can assure my Honourable friend that they devoted a day and a half to this subject on the basis of very elaborate material which had already been collected for them by their own Secretariats and by the Secretariat of the Government of India.

Mr. Uppi Saheb Bahadur: May I ask the Honourable Member whether the Government have taken any action with regard to the interests of cocoanut growers?

Mr. G. S. Bajpai: Sir, I live in a dry land, and I have not much knowledge about cocoanut, and as my Honourable friend, Sir Joseph Bhore, is not in his seat. I would ask my Honourable friend to wait and address his question to him.

Mr. M. Maswood Ahmad: Sir I congratulate my Honourable friend, Mr. Brij Kishore, for giving us an opportunity to discuss this question of agricultural distress. My Honourable friend, Mr. Bajpai, has said that Government do not give secondary importance to this question, but it is evident from the fact that all the front Government Benches are empty . . .

Mr. G. S. Bajpai: I do not wish to interrupt my Honourable friend, but I might explain to him, as was stated by the Honourable the Leader of the House this morning, that the absence of Government Members on the front Benches is due to their participation in the Conference which is applying itself in a practical manner to the very problem that we have been discussing today.

[At this stage, some of the Executive Councillors entered the Chamber.]

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): They are just in time to hear your speech.

Mr. M. Maswood Ahmad: But I am sorry to say that the Member in charge of the Agricultural Department is not present. Sir, I am sorry to say that at the time when the general discussion was going on on the Finance Bill, my Honourable friend, Mr. Bajpai, could not get a chance to reply to the questions that were raised at that time, and I had expected that today my Honourable friend would reply to some of those points, especially the question with regard to the export duty which we had pressed at that time. The remarks which I will make today will be in continuation of my speech delivered at the time of the General Discussion on the Finance Bill.

Now, Sir, what I want to say is this that there are recommendations contained in the Report of the Agricultural Commission, but up till now Government have not taken much interest in them, and many suggestions which are useful for the agriculturists are still kept in abeyance.

Mr. G. S. Bajpai: Again, Sir, I would remind my Honourable friend that in the Library of the House are available statements showing what action has been taken by the Government of India and by Local Governments on the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Agriculture. I would suggest to him that he should apply himself to that publication.

Mr. M. Maswood Ahmad: I am glad to hear that Government are ready to express what action they have taken and what further actions they propose to take on that measure. But my grievance was that up to this time no information was available as to the action which the Government had taken.

Then, Sir, there are thousands of suggestions in connection with this subject which cannot be discussed on the floor of the House unless people sit in a committee. You will be surprised to hear, Sir, that after a great deal of trouble Government had agreed to have an informal conference to discuss the rice question. A meeting of that informal conference was held and certain information was required and Government undertook to supply that information. After receiving that information, we thought that another sitting of the informal conference would be held and then all the figures would be discussed and then they would come to certain conclusions. But it came as a great surprise to me that, after supplying those figures, no meeting of that conference was held. Then I wrote a letter to the Government in that connection and drew their attention to the fact that a meeting of the postponed conference should be held, but, to my great surprise, Government were not ready to have another sitting of that conference where we could have discussed those figures which were supplied by the Government. Therefore, I would like to say this to the Government that when you supplied certain figures to us in that connection, it was your duty to have another meeting of that conference.

Then, Sir, it is very difficult to realise the trouble in which we in Bihar find ourselves. You have heard just now, Sir, that no remission has been made in the Province of Bihar. My Honourable friend said that as the Bihar area was under the permanent settlement and the rate was already so low, it did not deserve any remission. But I think my Honourable friend, Mr. Bajpai, is not fully aware of the conditions in Bihar. There are villages in Bihar where about 75 per cent of the income from the land is the land revenue of Government. I can give a name of a village to my Honourable friend and he can ascertain from the Bihar Government whether the fact is correct or not. There is a village, called "Keora" in the district of Patna where the entire land is *Naqdi* land and the rate which is realised from the tenants is six rupees a bigha and the land revenue is Rs. 4-8-0 per bigha. It is quite surprising how my Honourable friend, Mr. Bajpai, said that the rates of the revenue in permanently settled areas were so low that they did not deserve any remission from the Government. I see that my Honourable friend wants to say something.

Mr. G. S. Bajpai: I was only going to say that my inability to speak for every inch of land in Bihar is less surprising than the attempt on the part of my Honourable friend to magnify this one grain of sand in the whole size of the universe.

Mr. M. Maswood Ahmad: I can give many instances, but I have got only 15 minutes at my disposal, and if I begin to give the names of villages I shall not have sufficient time to speak about other matters.

The other point that I wish to bring to the notice of the House is that although agriculture is a transferred and a provincial subject, there are certain questions in this connection which relate to two or three Provinces, and it is not possible for one Province to do anything in that connection. So, with regard to these inter-provincial matters, Government should take interest and they should examine those questions. Unless they do that, it is very difficult for one Provincial Government to do anything. Further, in this connection, I want to say that Government must realise this question also that wheat and cotton are not the only agricultural products. Whatever the Government do, they do only for wheat and cotton. Whenever any reduction is made in the freight, it is for wheat or cotton, and whenever any duty is reduced or protection is given and anything is done, it is for wheat or cotton. Just now certain relief has been given to the cotton growers in Bombay. Certain duties have been abolished and certain facilities have been given to the cotton growers, but you find nothing has been done for the rice grower. Our rice growers are handicapped in sending their rice outside on account of this export duty. The Government are doing nothing to help the agriculturists of Madras, Bengal and Bihar. These are the points which Government must consider thoroughly and do something in this connection.

Before I sit down, I again press this point that the meeting of that informal conference, which has been postponed, should be held in the near future before we disperse, because, after the Simla Session, this Assembly will be dissolved, and there will be new election and the new Members that might come in will not be aware of the facts which were discussed at this meeting. So, it is better for the Government to have a sitting of that informal conference before we disperse from here.

Rai Bahadur Lala Brij Kishore (Lucknow Division: Non-Muhammadian Rural). Sir on the 14th February last, when I moved this Resolution, it was wholeheartedly supported by three Honourable Members, and today the Honourable Members who have spoken something against it on technical points at least have also shown sympathy with the object of the Resolution in one way or the other. My Honourable friend, the Raja Bahadur, in his speech assured the Government that by accepting this Resolution the cause of agricultural distress must be found out. My Honourable friend, Diwan Bahadur Ramaswami Mudaliar, said that this is the most important Resolution that has so far been tabled by non-official Members and has come up for consideration, and the same thing has been said by Mr. Amar Nath Dutt today. I am thankful to those Honourable Members who have supported it today. I respectfully appeal to the Government that there should be a thorough and careful enquiry and investigation at the sitting conference, so that the cause of agricultural distress might be traced, and when the cause is ascertained, action can easily be taken to remedy the evil. Sir, by doing so, our Government would be benefiting a large class of people who are more than 80 per cent and the result of this relief would be that the peasants would be able to pay their rents to their landlords and landlords would be able to pay their revenue to the Government and thus the condition of all concerned would be better, and, Sir, any expense in this regard would be a sort of investment. I also appeal to the Honourable Members of the Conference sitting now in the other Chamber to go minutely into the speeches delivered by the Honourable Members of this House, including the speech of my Honourable friend, Mr. Joshi, who always preaches a little dangerous doctrine in such matters only. I am very grateful to the Government for their very sympathetic attitude evinced in their reply to

[Rai Bahadur Lala Brij Kishore.]

the Resolution under discussion, and I hope they will take all the necessary steps for redressing the distress of the people who depend on agriculture, I mean both landlords and tenants.

Sir, since I moved the Resolution last, the Honourable the Finance Member had in his Budget speech fully reviewed the economic situation and had pointed out the manner in which that situation could be tackled. I take it that that is the view of the Government of India as a whole. I also find that they have already taken effective steps by appointing a marketing expert. The representatives of various Governments have also been invited, and they are sitting in conference over this very question. I trust that something substantial and to the benefit of the agriculturists and landholders will result from the deliberations of this Conference. Sir, I have suggested an enquiry into agricultural distress and have asked for means to be devised to improve the condition of the peasants and landholders of India. Sir, rural indebtedness and its extent is the greatest problem of the hour. Its solution can only be achieved by heroic methods and not by tinkering with it by means of petty legislation.

In view of all these facts and of the necessarily long delay which must entail if a committee be appointed, I ask for leave of the House to withdraw my Resolution, as the object of my Resolution for the present has been achieved, and I would appeal to the Government to appoint such a committee if attempts in the conference do not prove to be of practical use. With these words, I beg leave of the House to withdraw the Resolution.

Diwan Bahadur A. Ramaswami Mudaliar (Madras City: Non-Muham-madan Urban): I want to make a personal explanation. I was speaking on the last day when this Resolution was under discussion, and it was my intention to pursue this subject this morning, but I was requisitioned elsewhere to fulfill an engagement which I had already made. But it was my duty to have informed you beforehand of that fact and to have taken your permission. I regret that I did not do so, and I wish to apologise to you and to the House for the seeming discourtesy of which I have been guilty.

The Resolution was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

RESOLUTION *RE* CONSTITUTION OF MALABAR INTO A SEPARATE PROVINCE.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer (Rohilkund and Kumaon Divisions: Non-Muham-madan Rural): Sir, the Resolution, which my Honourable friend, Sardar Nihal Singh, has asked me to move, runs thus:

"This Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council that steps be taken to constitute Malabar (Kerala) (Madras Presidency) as a separate Province together with neighbouring Malayalam-speaking areas."

In the Resolution, as it is printed in the agenda, it is "Malayee" which is a typographical error. I must admit that I cannot speak as a representative of Malabar and when we hear the representative of Malabar on this subject, we will probably know that he does not agree with me. Sir,

I make this preliminary observation and judging from a rather reckless outburst in the newspapers by the representative from Malabar it has disappointed his own constituents in Malabar and judging from a newspaper article in the *Mathrabhumi*, a very cautious newspaper, it appears that Malabar is not represented in this House as it ought to be represented, because our democrats, Members of the Democratic Party, run with the hare and hunt with the hound ignoring their duties and responsibilities to their own constituents, and, therefore, I have to take upon myself the duty of speaking for the people of Malabar.

Mr. B. Das (Orissa Division: Non-Muhammadan): That is a very serious charge against my Party.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: It is perfectly right when my friend says that it is a serious charge against a member of his Party who misrepresents Malabar in this particular matter.

Mr. K. P. Thampan (West Coast and Nilgiris: Non-Muhammadan Rural): I am glad there is one here who, though hailing from Rohilkund and Kumaon, calls himself a true representative of Malabar, and is prepared to speak for them.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: I represent the public opinion of Malabar in this matter, and I have received several letters, and my Honourable friend can verify my statement when he returns to Malabar, and I propose to follow him.

Mr. B. V. Jadhav (Bombay Central Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Then will the Honourable Member stand from the Malabar constituency?

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: I am not lured by these Legislatures and I will decide whether I should stand for these Legislatures or not.

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad (United Provinces Southern Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): We shall be very sorry to lose you from the United Provinces!

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: Quite so, because several representatives of my constituency have been coming from Moradabad, Bijnore and other places from the United Provinces and they have been pressing me to stand from my old constituency though I do not feel like doing so. I do not know whether it will be worth my while to stand for this Legislative Assembly before the new Constitution comes, whether I should travel over my far-flung constituency and fight an election, if a fight is necessary, for a period of two years to repeat what we have been doing and speaking here. I might be charmed by the new Constitution, but let me say straightaway to, I believe, the Deputy Leader of the Democratic Party that I have no serious intention of standing from Malabar for this Legislative Assembly. I have, however, every intention of going to Malabar and speaking to my people that the time has come to call their soul their own, as they are most certainly doing. Sir, Mr. Thampan either in his capacity as a member of the Democratic Party, an office-bearer of that Party, or in his capacity as a representative of Malabar made an

[Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer.]

inaccurate statement, and for inaccurate statements the Democratic Party cannot be beaten in this House. (Laughter.) He made an inaccurate statement in the press that no one in Malabar wants a separation. That was his statement in the newspaper press and he said that I got hold of a few Muhammadans in the lobby and told them that Malabar, if separated, will benefit the Muslims and that is how I was trying to get a place in the ballot,—a rather unworthy thing for a Member who is opposed to my view to say publicly. But the Democrats will say anything and everything, false or true, and the falsehood that Mr. Thampan has uttered is that no one in Malabar wants this separation. Sir, I have got telegrams from Malabar people that they want a separation. One of them is certainly from the Muslims of Malabar, and Muhammad Abdur Rahaman wires:

“District and all Taluk Boards unanimously passed resolutions separate Malabar Province Muslims solidly support.”

Sir, assisted by a convenient news agency it was possible for Mr. Thampan to say in Upper India that no one wants separation in Malabar.

Mr. K. P. Thampan: When did my friend get that telegram?

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: The telegram is dated the 4th April.

Mr. Uppi Saheb Bahadur (West Coast and Nilgiris: Muhammadan): That gentleman is a Cochinite.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: That gentleman may be a Cochinite; I am also a Cochinite, but I am also a British citizen.

Mr. K. P. Thampan: This telegram was received after I made the statement to the press.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: The Honourable gentleman's statement to the press was made probably three weeks ago. This telegram came to me yesterday because it was in the newspapers that a Resolution regarding the separation of Malabar was balloted for discussion. The day Mr. Thampan made the statement, to which I have referred, I read in the *Madras Mail* that Ernad taluk had passed a resolution asking for the separation of Malabar. And here is a gentleman, a responsible member of the Democratic Party, proclaiming to the world that no one wants separation. Sir, I have got another telegram and that is from the Chairman of the District Board in Malabar.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh (Muzaffarpur *cum* Champaran: Non-Muhammadan): What has the Democratic Party got to do with it?

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: I will presently explain. Democracy must not mean irresponsibility, and responsible office-bearers of that Party must not speak things that are not correct.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh: Mr. Thampan is not an office-bearer of that Party.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: I am glad that after my friend's joining that Party, Mr. Thampan has lost his office. That is some progress, because he was an office-bearer of the Party before the advent of Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh.

Sir, this is the telegram that Mr. Palat, the Chairman of the District Board of Malabar, has sent me:

"See Madras Council Proceedings Second August and Eleventh November, 1933, also Malabar Muslims entitled to one-third of 29 Muslim seats on population basis but allotted unjustly seven seats only."

Mr. K. P. Thampan: May I ask when that telegram was received?

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: This telegram is dated the 4th April from Calicut.

Mr. K. P. Thampan: The Chairman of the District Board does not say anything in that telegram about the resolution passed by the District Board while the other telegram sent by one Abdur Rahaman says that the District Board has passed a resolution. That is why I suspect it.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: I am placing before this House facts wired to me which this House, and through this House the country, ought to know. Probably Mr. Thampan presumed that I, a voluntary exile from Malabar, was the only man who wanted the constitution of Malabar into a separate Province.

Mr. K. P. Thampan: Mr. Palat is the President of the District Board, and if the District Board had passed a resolution like that, it was up to him to give that information.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: I had written to Mr. Palat, and this telegram is a reply to my letter. I had made a request to Mr. Palat to supply me with information on this matter, because an eminent representative from Malabar had proclaimed to the world that the Malayalis did not want separation!

Mr. K. P. Thampan: I still maintain that.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: Not one Malayali wants separation,—that was his statement, and he still maintains it. Mr. Palat is not a Malayali and Mr. Thampan is! He is Chairman of the District Board of Malabar, a position that Mr. Thampan has yet to occupy, and during his brilliant political career he has failed to occupy that position. Sir, we have got obstacles in the way, and one of those obstacles which I propose to fight in Malabar is Mr. Thampan. (Laughter.) He has been in the Madras Provincial Council for long years. His whole career has been cast in the Madras Presidency, and I can understand his not wishing to get out of the Province to which he has been accustomed and in which he has made a name for himself. But because he is prejudiced, he should not underrate what he does not believe in. He must not say that no Malayali wants the separation of Malabar into a separate Province. I do not know the influence that the Indian National Congress has in Malabar. Mr. Thampan knows it better; but the Indian National Congress has constituted Malabar into a separate Province. It calls it Kerala. And whether Travancore and

[Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer.]

Cochin are included in the Congress constitution or not included, I am not in a position to say. But I believe that the Indian States are left out and that the Congress constitution only stands for British India, as I knew the constitution to be when I was a Congressman, and the constitution has not been altered since. Just as Utkala is a separate Province, and just as Sind is a separate Province, Provinces brought into existence on linguistic lines, we the people of Malabar demand that Malabar must be constituted as a separate Province. Sir, if you read the latest Census report, you will find that Malabar as a Province is the most compact Province, because both linguistically and from the points of view of custom and tradition, Malabar stands by itself. And, therefore, I do not really see why Government, specially when the Federation is coming into existence, should not follow up the good example they have set up in regard to Orissa; and there I congratulate my Honourable friend, Mr. B. Das, for his activities here and in England.

Mr. B. Das: Hard work of 30 long years made Government accept that

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: Hard work, I agree, has been crowned with ample results, and I congratulate Mr. Das on what he has achieved for Orissa after 30 years' struggle, and I hope I will not, when I lay the foundation for a new struggle in Malabar, have to wait for 30 years. I know it is a folly of John Bull to wait until you make some fuss; but John Bull is now going into the background: your Federal Government is coming into existence, and why, I ask, should Malabar not be able to stand upon its own legs? If there are representatives here from the Andhra country, as I believe there are, I know that they want that the Andhradesha should be constituted into a separate Province

Mr. B. Sitaramaraju (Ganjam *cum* Vizagapatam: Non-Muhammadian Rural): Yes; we want.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: and the Andhras have been carrying on a splendid and spirited campaign for the separation of Andhra from the Madras Presidency. I do not see why the Andhras, who speak the Andhra language, have Andhra traditions, Andhra culture and Andhra history, should not have an Andhra Province

An Honourable Member: And the Andhra University.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: They have got an Andhra University which I think is a happy augury, because they will soon get the Andhra Province. A Resolution was discussed, probably passed—I have not looked it up—in the Madras Provincial Council on the separation of the Andhra Province. When the Andhras are separated from the Tamil country, what is left to us? (A Voice: "Tamil Nadu.") My friend, Mr. James, full of ideas about the Tamil Province, says Tamil Nadu will be left there. I know that the Tamils have been complaining that we Malayalees have been exploiting their Province. I do not for a moment say that it is not a truthful complaint. It is perfectly true that Malayalees were until lately in the Executive Council of the Tamil Government, but still the

Malayalees complain that, when matters such as reduction of land revenue and things of that kind come forward, we are judged more by the Tamil standard and less by the interests of Malabar. We may have an advantage; we have also a disadvantage. Our position is more comparable to Cochin and Travancore; and today in this period of great agricultural depression, what have the Cochin and Travancore Governments done? They have given concessions in regard to land revenue which the Madras Government have refused to give to the Malabar Province. Why? Because we are not in a position to bring the same pressure to bear upon the Madras Government as we will be when our capital is Calicut and not Madras. We are told the size of the district is not big enough to be a Province. Provinces must no longer be made on considerations of size or extent. On the contrary, hereafter we must consider one or two important points. Financially, can this province stand upon its own legs? Malabar can stand upon its own legs financially

An Honourable Member: Without any subvention?

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: Without any subvention of any kind whatever, from the Central Government. We will not be able to pay our Ministers four thousand rupees, and we do not want to pay our Ministers four thousand rupees. A small Province will give small salaries; but it can run its administration on sound and economic lines. I know Mr. Thampan, unfaithful to the creed of democracy, drew across the trail a red herring, saying I was playing into the hands of the Muslims. I say, why should I not give unto the Muslims of Malabar, the Moplahs of Malabar, a virile people, why should I not give unto them what is their due? They are more than 30 per cent of the population

Mr. K. P. Thampan: Nor did I say they should not be given what is their due.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: I know the Honourable gentleman will deny it, but he proclaimed to the newspapers that I canvassed Muslim signatures on the assurance that the position of the Muslims will be better in Malabar than it is today, and thus democracy was playing to the communal gallery

Mr. K. P. Thampan: I said the truth and nothing but the truth; that was what you did.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: I say on the floor of this House that Malabar, which consists of the Hindus and the Muslims, will profit by its separation, yes, Hindu and Muslim alike: I say on the floor of this House that the Muslims of Malabar do not get proper treatment in the Madras Presidency: the lion's share of it goes to the Non-Brahmins and not Muslims. In Malabar, there is not that non-Brahmin question; in Malabar, there is the question

Mr. K. P. Thampan: Saviour of the Moplahs!

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: I am not a saviour of the Moplahs much as I would like to be a saviour of the Moplahs. I want to save them from the old traditions that they have been following.

Mr. K. P. Thampan: What a noble task!

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: A noble task, I agree; and I want one-third of the population of Malabar to have better education, so that they will break from the traditions of the past: they have not had those educational opportunities; and if Bengal with a minority of the Hindu population can be a separate Province, I do not see why a two-third Hindu majority in Malabar must be afraid of a one-third minority of Moplahs; and I may say straightaway that the Mopla is not a rank communalist. He is a fighter; touched with fire he becomes hot as gun-powder (Laughter)—that is perfectly true; but I want to civilise the Moplah; I want to educate the Moplah; those educational facilities have been denied to the Moplah and I know that the Moplah districts of Malabar have moved in demanding separation; Mr. Thampan may make it a communal question; and so long as communal electorates continue, Mr. Thampan and his tribe can thrive on it; but I am anxious, not from a communal point of view, but from Malabar's point of view, to build up this new Province. It has a greatness of its own; it has a genius of its own; there, for instance, you have the Marumakkathayam Law—the matriarchal system prevails in Malabar, not the system that is known outside or this side of the Western Ghats. Why should I not keep up the genius of this race? So long as we do not come with the beggar's bowl either to the Central Government or to a Provincial Government (Interruption). What does Mr. Jadhav know about that part of India? So long as we do not come and disturb you people in Bombay, though we will keep South Canara, that is, until a Kanarese Province is created and then we will give to them what belongs to the Kannada speaking people, but with this proviso that there is a part of Malabar even in South Canara which is Malayalam speaking. Up in the Nilgiri Hills also you have got Malayalam speaking tracts. All this must come to us

Mr. Uppi Saheb Bahadur: And a portion of Coimbatore also.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: Mr. Uppi Saheb is an authority on this matter—and probably a portion of Coimbatore also. Here I may quote Sir Charles Innes singing the glory of Malabar. We differ from the Tamil and other parts of the Presidency, not only in our language, not only in our dress, not only in our method of thinking, but also in our dwelling:

“The houses of the people are not for the most part congregated in vallages of the type common elsewhere in the Presidency, but are scattered on the cultivated lands and along the foot of the hills surrounding the rice fields, each standing in its own garden. Only 8 per cent. of the people live in towns: the proportion for the Presidency is 11 per cent.; and the major portion of these are to be found in five or six large towns which include considerable areas more strictly rural than urban in character. For instance, within the limits of Calicut, at once the largest and most densely populated town, there are large stretches of cultivation and comparatively few streets and the number of houses to the square mile is only 472, while in towns such as Madras, Madura and Salem, the average ranges from two to three thousand to the square mile.”

Objections which I can anticipate that men like Mr. Thampan will raise against my Resolution are these. Are not the Malayalis getting more jobs than they deserve in the Tamil Provinces, are they not getting more jobs than their proportion in the population would entitle them to? If that is so, we should not thrive upon an injustice. Again, it may be asked, can a small Province like Malabar make an impression on India? I say, certainly it can. Malabar will have direct representation in the Federation, and, as an independent unit of the Federation,

5 P.M.

Malabar will be heard better than it is heard now, and then in this continent of India people will realise that there is a nation called the Malabar nation, a Kerala nation. India consists of many nations, Sir, some small as Czecho-Slovakia, some of them large as the United Kingdom. For instance, the United Provinces has a population larger than that of the United Kingdom, but these small and big Provinces must go to make the nation of the future. I have no harsh word against the Tamils. They have given us hospitality in their own Presidency to which we do not belong. They have given us also opportunities, I admit, but they have denied us one thing. They have not enabled us as a nation to make our contribution to Indian politics, to Indian nationalism, and even to Indian literature

Mr. B. Das: Sir Sankaran Nair.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: Yes, I am very glad, my friend, Mr. B. Das, mentions the name of an old and esteemed friend of mine, Sir Sankaran Nair. I am also glad to say that he is a supporter of this movement for the separation of Malabar, even though Mr. Thampan may say that he is not a Malayalee! He is one of the great leaders of Malabar. He is greatly respected in Malabar, and after all that he has seen and known, he has come to the conclusion that Malabar must also be constituted as a separate Province like Sind is constituted, like the Province of Orissa, like the Andhras rightly aspire for their Province also being so constituted . . .

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt (Burdwan Division. Non-Muhammadan Rural). Why not Gangarides?

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: Next time I hope my friend will succeed in balloting a Resolution for that beautiful mystery. It is not necessary at this stage to take any more time of the House. I am quite willing to face the music in this House as well as outside this House.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): Resolution moved:

"This Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council that steps be taken to constitute Malabar (Kerala) (Madras Presidency) as a separate Province together with neighbouring Malayalam-speaking areas."

The discussion will be carried over to the Simla Session.

Rao Bahadur B. L. Patil (Bombay Southern Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): I want to move my amendment to this Resolution.

An Honourable Member: You cannot.

Rao Bahadur B. L. Patil: I can. I am afraid, Sir, in view of one of the rulings already given in this House, I shall not be able to move my amendment in the Simla Session; therefore with your permission, I should like to move my amendment today

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): Order, order. Mr. Patil's amendment is not in order. It enlarges the scope of the Resolution altogether. The Resolution is for constituting Malabar into a separate Province, and the Honourable Member wants to take the occasion to express an opinion by means of his amendment that Karnataka must be made a separate Province.

Rao Bahadur B. L. Patil: Sir, I should like to draw your attention to the ruling given in this House before.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): Which one? Page?

Rao Bahadur B. L. Patil: It was given on the 1st February, 1922.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): What is the page of the book of rulings?

Rao Bahadur B. L. Patil: Page 399. On the 1st February, 1922, a Resolution was moved regarding Women's Franchise for the Assembly Elections to which Dr. H. S. Gour moved as an amendment advocating also the removal of the sex bar in the matter of practice in the Law Courts. Objection was taken to the amendment under Standing Order 33(1) that it was not relevant to the original motion. But, Sir, the Chair ruled that the amendment was in order, because it was within the scope. I may be permitted to explain that my amendment is also within the scope of the original Resolution.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): Can the Honourable Member show the Chair as to how it is in order?

Rao Bahadur B. L. Patil: Sir, my point is this. When this House considers the Resolution, it has first of all to decide upon the principle whether there should be re-construction of the Provinces on a linguistic and geographical basis. That is the first thing to which this House will have to apply its mind. Then, in the second place, Malabar and Karnataka are adjoining areas, and all relevant questions can be considered together. For these two reasons and relying upon the precedent which I have just pointed out I submit that my amendment is in order and is within the scope of Standing Order No. 33.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): If the Honourable Member had read the whole of that ruling he would have observed that the Chair found a considerable doubt about the admissibility of that amendment because the Chair pointed out:

"I need not say that the point is open to doubt and is not for that reason to be taken as a binding precedent. I allow the Honourable Member from Nagpur to move his amendment."

Rao Bahadur B. L. Patil: May I point out, Sir

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): Order. Order. The Honourable Member cannot interrupt the Chair when the Chair is speaking.

The Chair has carefully considered the question, and it now definitely rules that the amendment of Rao Bahadur Patil is not in order.

Mr. K. P. Thampan: I would just like to

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): There cannot be any discussion on that.

Mr. K. P. Thampan: No, Sir. What I want to point out is this. The Assembly Session will be held only after three months in Simla, and, therefore, if you will allow me to make a personal statement, I shall be very grateful to you

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): Personal statement?

Mr. K. P. Thampan: Yes, Sir, it is a personal statement. My friend, Mr. Ranga Iyer, said that I stated an untruth in saying that no one . . .

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The Chair does not think it can allow that . . .

Mr. K. P. Thampan: Sir, I happen to be the elected representative of Malabar South Canara and Nilgiris in this House. Till today I have not received any representations from any local body or any association or meeting in my constituency regarding the separation of Malabar . . .

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): Order, order. The Chair thinks that is a sort of statement which the Honourable Member should incorporate in his speech, and he will get ample opportunities of doing so when the discussion is resumed. Nothing will be lost in the meantime.

Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer: The Honourable Member got a letter from the Editor of the *Mathrabhumi*.

STATEMENT OF BUSINESS.

The Honourable Sir Bojenāra Mitler (Leader of the House). With your permission, Sir, I desire to make a statement as to the probable course of Government business in the week beginning Monday, the 9th April. On that day, a motion will be made for the election of Members to the Court of the Delhi University. If the Indian States (Protection) Bill should not be completed at the time when you adjourn the House on Saturday, the first business will be the completion of that Bill. Thereafter motions will be made to take into consideration and pass the Indian Tariff (Taxation Protection) Amendment Bill, as reported by the Select Committee. It is hoped that that Bill may be passed by the evening of Wednesday, the 11th. Thereafter, the House will sit on Thursday, the 12th, and Saturday, the 14th,—Friday, the 13th, being a gazetted holiday. The business to be brought before the House will be a resolution dealing with the Road Fund and the following legislative programme:—Motions to take into consideration and pass the Trade Disputes (Extending) Bill, the Indian Land Cess (Amendment) Bill, and the Factories Bill, as reported by Select Committee, and, should time be available, motions will be made to refer to Select Committee the Indian Petroleum Bill, the Indian Carriage by Air Bill, and the Indian Aircraft Bill.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): It is the duty of the Chair to observe that it is now up to the Government and the Leaders of Parties to consider the programme before the House. The Chair has looked into the calendar, and it finds that after the 21st of this month the Muharram holidays begin, and that takes away four days. If the business of the House is not concluded by the 21st, then it will have to be resumed only on the 25th or 26th. In view of this, the Chair thinks it is up to the Leader of the House to get into touch with the Leaders of Parties and decide a programme in accordance with the time that can be reasonably expected to be at the disposal of this House.

Diwan Bahadur A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: I would like to submit that while we are anxious to co-operate in trying to get through the work, we are bound to state that Government should seriously consider whether they are justified in putting forward all the work that is mapped out at present for this Session, and to ask whether it will not be better to hold over some of the less important and less urgent work for another Session. This Session has considerably been prolonged beyond the usual expectations. Honourable Members have made arrangements whereby they must leave Delhi by a certain date, and I hope that Government will consider whether it is not desirable to postpone some at least of the items of legislation that they are thinking of, so that in a fair way, with a more or less full House, discussion may really go on. Subject to that, I may say that we are willing to consider any feasible methods of expediting the work.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh: The Simla Session might be held early.

The Honourable Sir Brojendra Mitter: It is only the most important bills which Government want to finish this Session, and some of the minor issues that I have mentioned in my statement of business for the next week are merely to fill up the gaps in case the Select Committees on the two Excise Bills do not finish their work. It is not necessary that they should be passed this Session. It is because of the uncertainty with regard to the time that will be taken by the Select Committees on the two Excise Bills that we have brought in those measures in order to fill up the gap. Anyhow, I shall remember your suggestion, and get into touch with Leaders of Parties. We are anxious to finish by the 21st at the latest, and I hope that that is the unanimous view of Members of this House.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shammukham Chetty) According to present arrangements, it is probable that the House would have to meet in Simla this year very much earlier than usual. We may have to begin some time in July, and, in view of that, the Chair thinks a determined effort must be made on the part of the Government and the Leaders of Parties to make up their mind to finish the Session by the 21st of this month. The Select Committees that are considering the Excise Bills must also keep this in mind so that they may send in their reports in time to finish the whole business by the 21st instant.

Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad: On the whole we have tried our level best to co-operate with the Government and to try and finish as early as possible. But Government are now piling up work after work. We have not only been sitting now six days of the week, but we are working on the Select Committees in the evenings and it is a great strain on the Non Official Members who cannot rely upon any secretariat. I may add that we have got our responsibility to the public in relation to these Bills and we have to discuss these things in full. I hope Government will not adopt the practice of moving for closure. We must have full opportunity to discuss the Bills in full, and it is really for the Government not to bring forward any contested measures on which the country is so well divided.

The Honourable Sir Brojendra Mitter: If my Honourable friend does not contest, it will be uncontested.

The Assembly then adjourned till Ten of the Clock on Saturday, the 7th April, 1934.

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